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Guitar Player

OCTOBER 2001

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SUPERCHARGED
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ROCKABILLY**



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HOOKER**
PUYA
STEVE HOWE
**DOYLE
BRAMHALL II**

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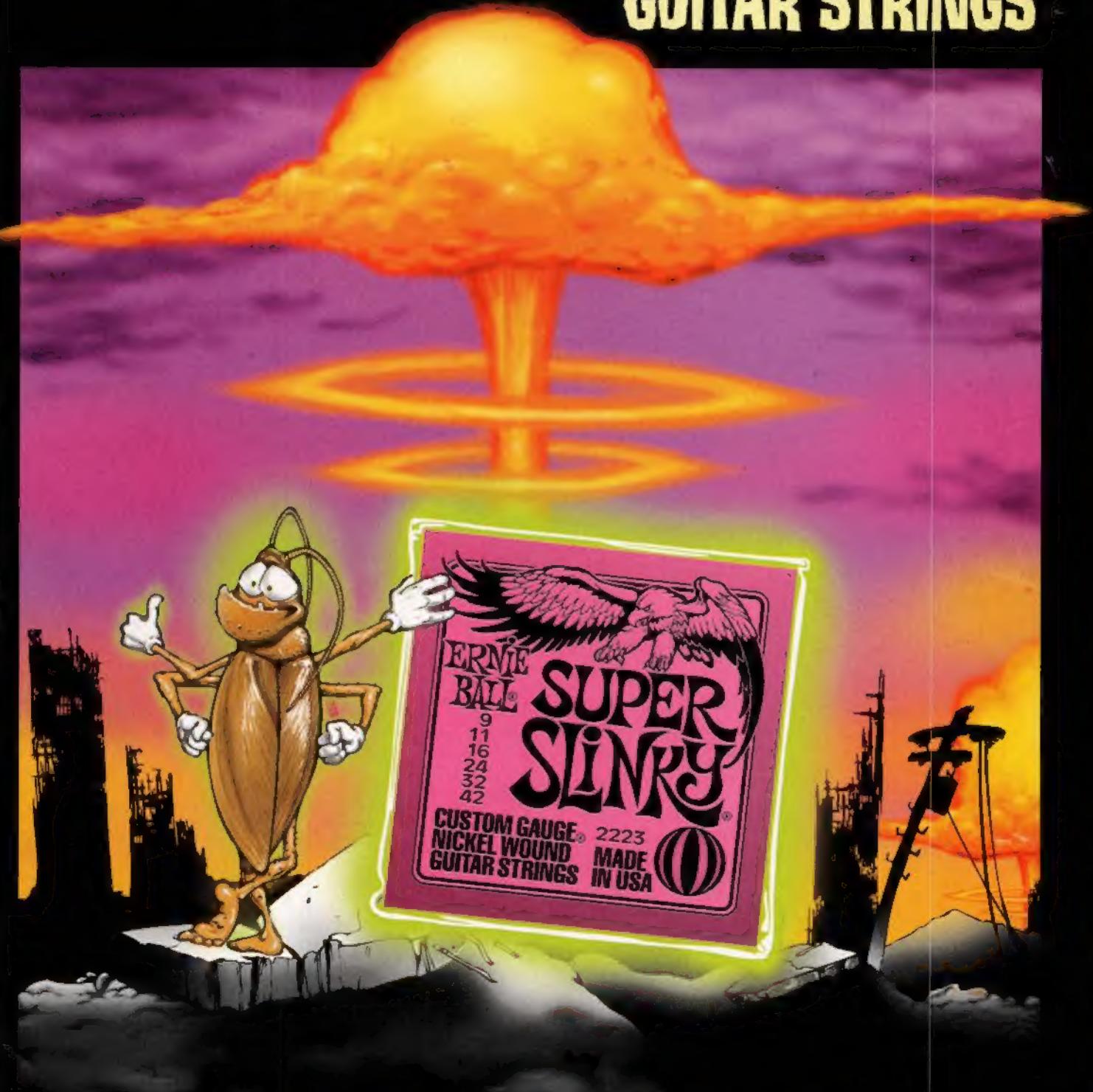
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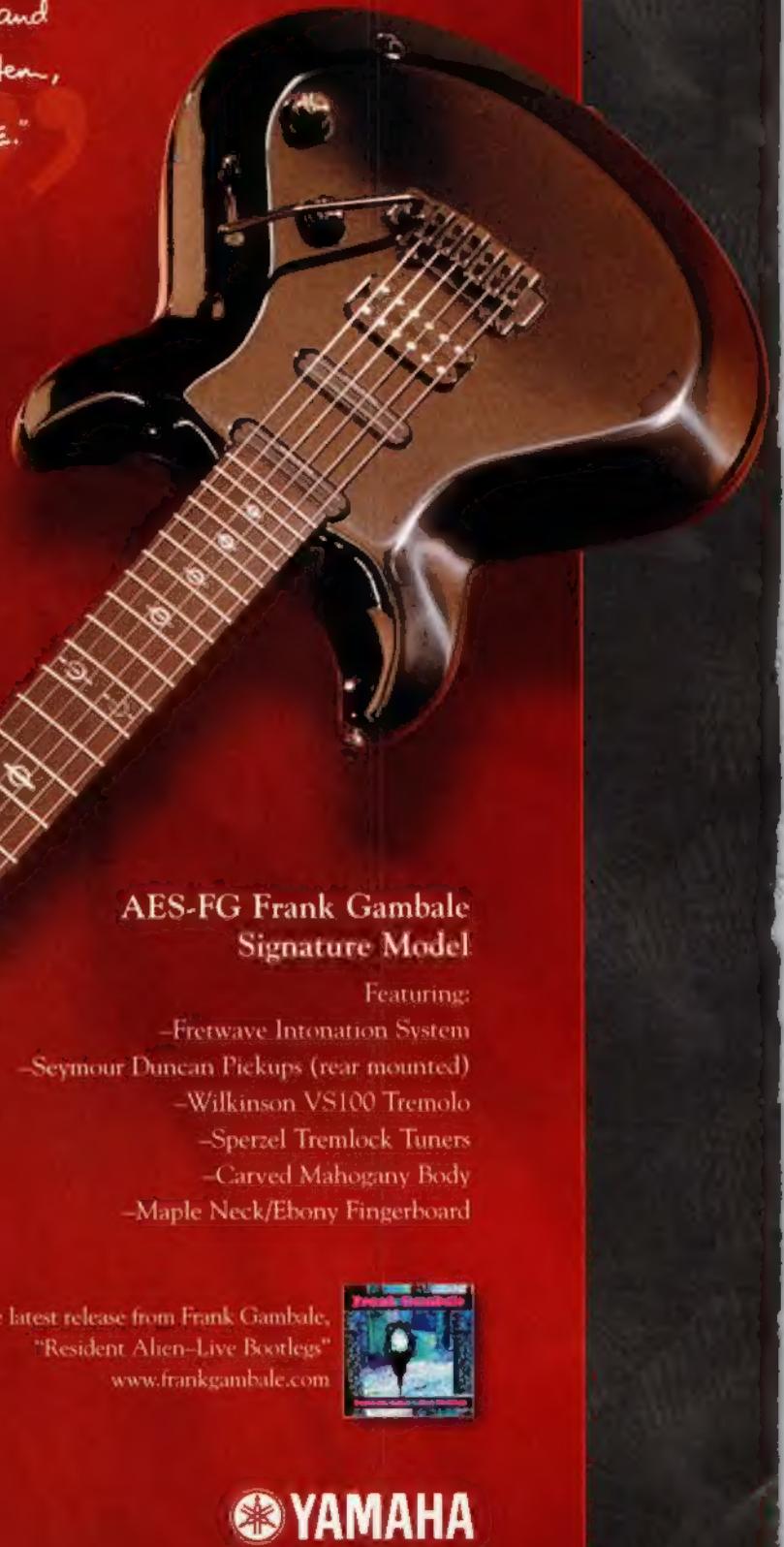
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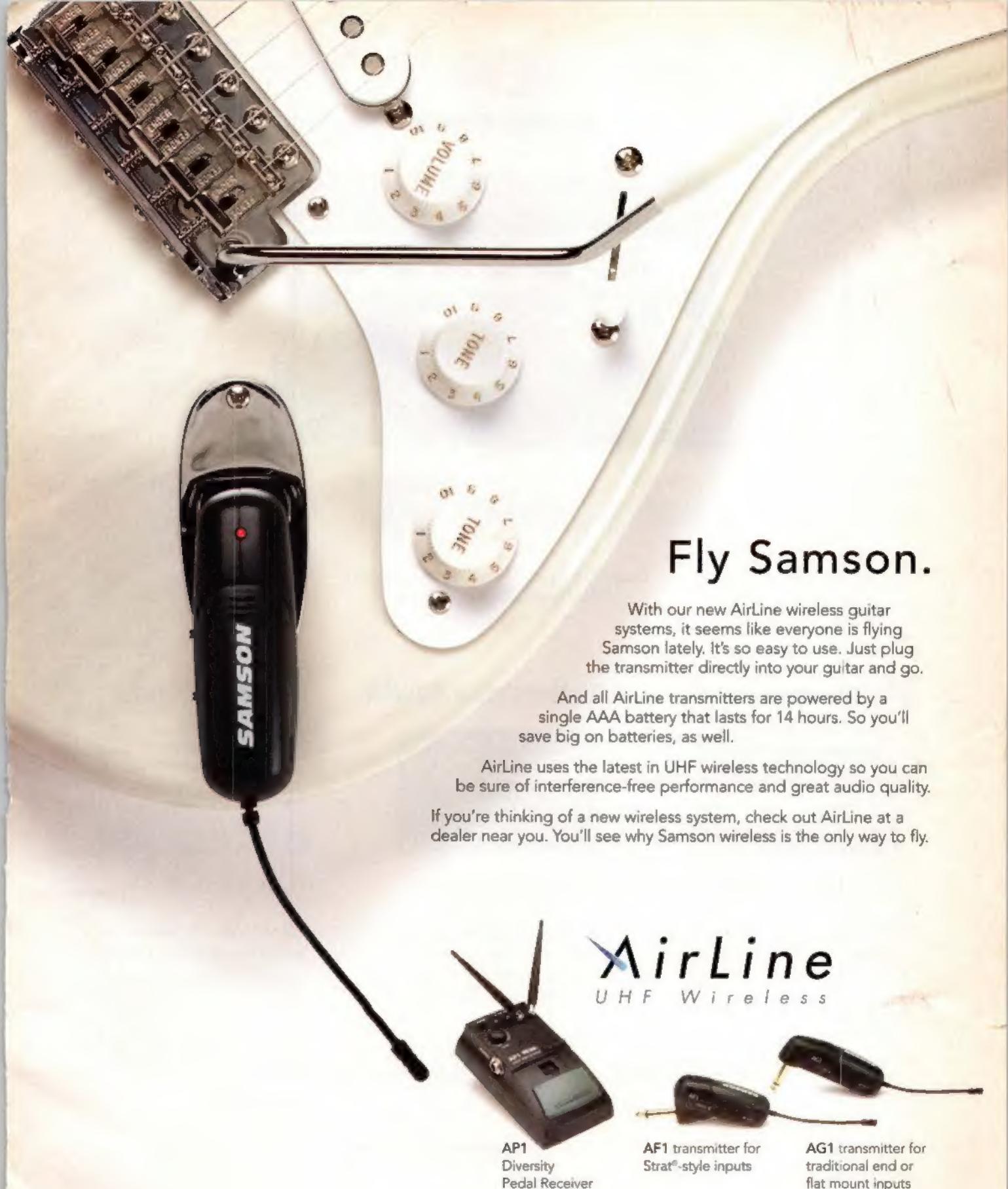
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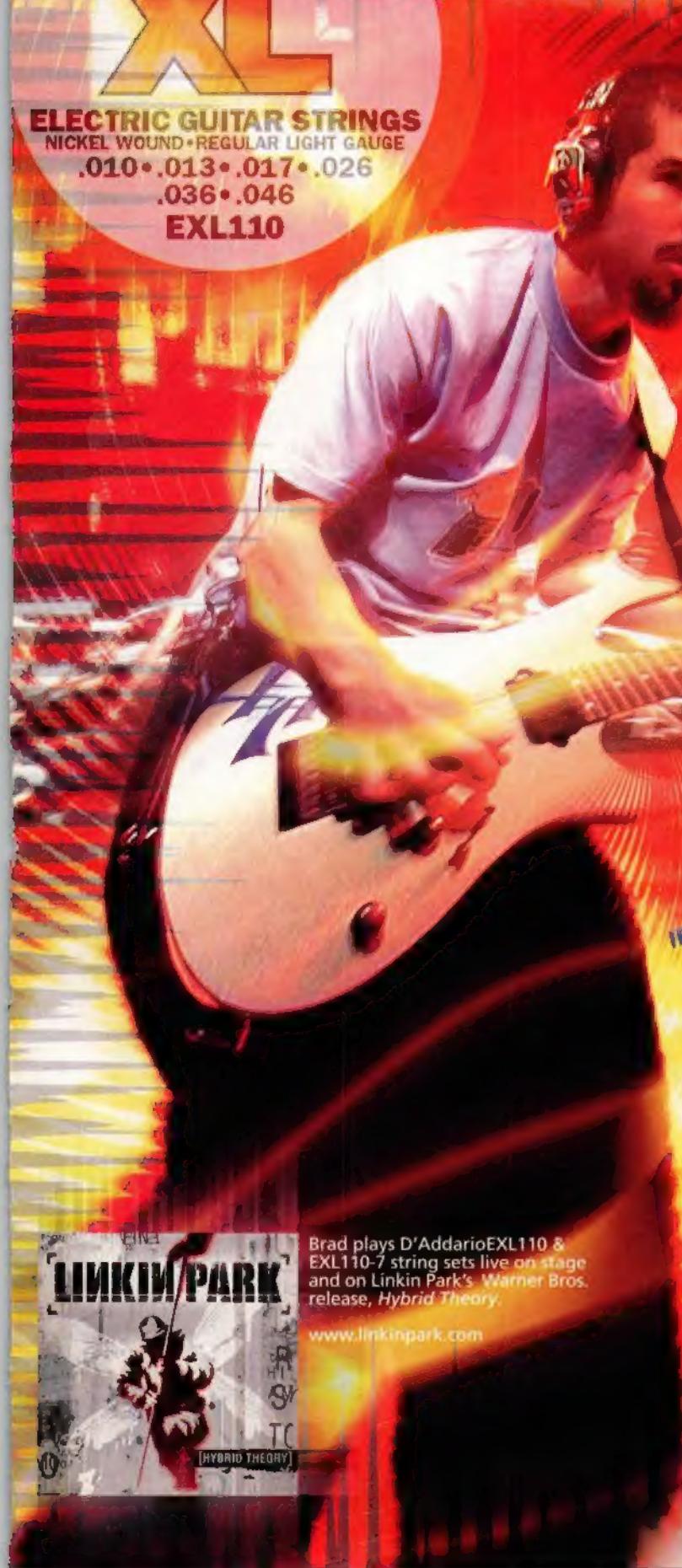
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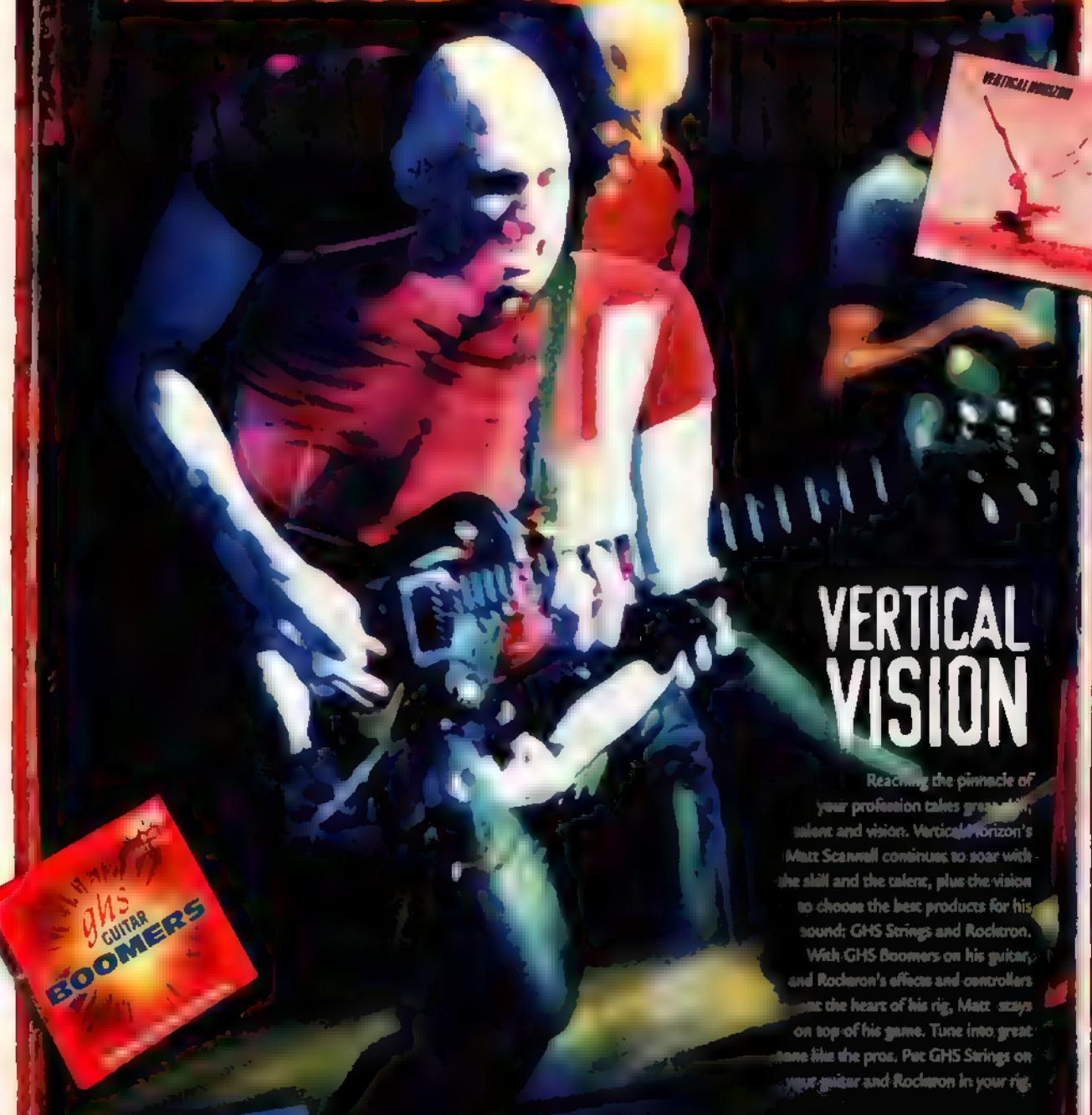
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Soundhole Honoring Legitimacy

We just lost three great guitarists, and everyone who has sworn allegiance to the guitar should feel a profound loss. Not because John Lee Hooker, Chet Atkins, and Roy Nichols were supernaturally gifted players—respecting their chops is a given—but because they transcended their roles as guitarists and expanded our musical vocabulary, enhanced our culture, and inspired other musicians. And there's an even more fundamental element of their towering influence—they were absolutely *legit*.

These men were, of course, human, and I'm sure they compiled a lifetime of less-than-altruistic moments. So what? That stuff just levels the playing field for all mortals. The critical issue is that they honored their talent, they honored their instrument, and they didn't lie to their audiences.

When you saw John Lee, Chet, or Roy in concert, or heard their music on jukeboxes, radios, or CD players, you got the real deal. Each man stayed true to himself and his music, and when success found them, it had to cut the deal on *their* terms. And if any myth about those guys deserves credible consideration, it's that they would have happily played on with the same passion, even if they made music in obscurity.

How do you and I measure up against such examples of creative strength and purity? Well, I'll leave you to consider your own demons—as I will wrestle with mine. But it would be a shame if the guitar community let these three giants pass on without learning *something* from them. Here are three humble suggestions on how we might honor their memory:

- Believe in yourself. Many

musicians are fearful of letting their instincts direct their creativity. Defaulting to melodic clichés and familiar sounds is a safe haven, but staying within boundaries someone else has drawn is hardly being true to yourself—and that's a form of dishonesty. Try listening to your muse for a change. You just might stumble across a stylistic twist you can call your own.

- Believe in others. Every month, the GP mailbox is crammed with guitarists disrespecting other guitarists. No wonder we're so afraid to innovate—our peers trash us unmercifully if we don't meet their expectations. Let's try to open our ears a tad more, and embrace new ideas and new sounds. Hey, you might pick up a cool lick from someone you would have totally flamed as a less-enlightened listener.

- Be true. You know when



MARC C. DAVIS

you're being real. And you know when you're playing jive to impress friends, make a buck, get a date, or prop up your fragile ego. Well, jive is just vacuous blather, and it won't garner lasting respect. In fact, it *dishonors* those artists who have suffered to teach society the difference between creative truths and commercial cunning. So let's cut the crap, play from our hearts, and make John Lee, Chet, and Roy a little prouder about the guitarists they left behind.

—MICHAEL MOLENDA ■

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VALVE REACTOR: THE INSIDE STORY

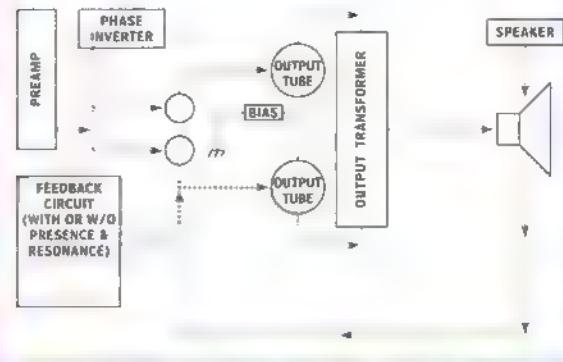
In the Valve Reactor power amplifier, a 12AX7 dual-triode tube (12AX7s are typically used as preamp tubes) is connected directly to an output transformer. Because of the relatively low Wattage of this 100% tube power amp, our amp designers had to develop a way to raise the output level to one which could actually drive speakers to stage volume levels while maintaining the integrity of the tube-amp sound and feel. We accomplished this by creating a circuit of proprietary design dubbed the VOX VariAmp Power Circuit. The output transformer is connected to this new VariAmp Power Circuit which uses Constant Current design and Reactive Feedback technology. The VariAmp Power Circuit cannot be overdriven, is totally transparent and can be configured to be 1, 15, 30 or 60 Watts.

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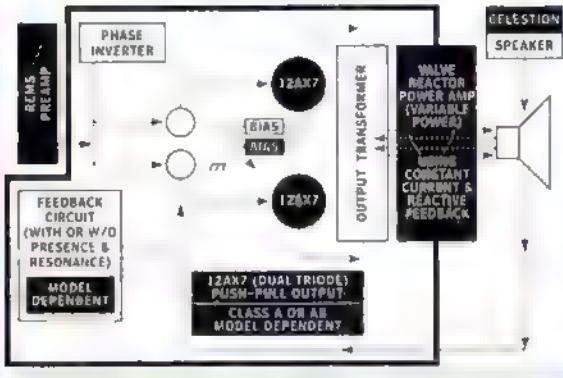
The Reactive Feedback technology used in the VariAmp Circuit "reads" the impedance curve of the speaker and then reports this reactive information back to the secondary side of the output transformer. This information is fed back to the primary side of the output transformer and therefore changes the loading on the tubes, another important part of the vital role an all-tube power amp plays in the creation of traditional tube tone.

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- **SPEAKER:** 1x12" Custom-voiced Celestion (AD60VT), 2 x 12" Custom-voiced Celestion (AD120VT)
- **POWER:** 60W RMS@8ohm (AD60VT), 2 x 60W RMS@8ohm (AD120VT)
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Feedback

Buddy Guy

Thank you for your excellent interview and cover shot of the legendary Buddy Guy [Aug. '01]. This man is the real deal, and I know I wasn't alone in roaring with excitement when this issue arrived in the mail. I've seen Buddy perform live twice, and I met him in Santa Rosa, California, last March. He was as real, honest, and genuine a man as you could want to meet—and very gracious to his fans. You quoted him as saying, "I want to make my fans smile for an hour or two," and he put on such a show that I haven't stopped smiling since.

Jason Freeman
San Pablo, CA

I was sorry to read Buddy Guy playing the race card and blaming his skin color for not being on the radio more. Listen to the radio! There are all kinds of African American artists getting airplay. What I *don't* see are many artists above the age of 40—regardless of their color or musical style—getting mainstream attention. It's a sad state when radio ignores the best in the land, be it Buddy Guy or Buddy Miller.

Brian Turner
Clovis, CA

I own and operate an independent blues label in Los Angeles, and I want to thank you for continued excellent coverage of blues artists. The issue on Buddy Guy and his new release, *Sweet Tea*, was first rate. Guy is a living legend, and he deserves all the attention and compliments. His work on Junior Wells' *Hoodoo Man* album literally changed my life, and he has continued to produce groundbreaking material for the past three-and-a-half decades.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say "great job" on your work in general. Your artist profiles, gear reviews, and instructional material are the best in the business. Every month, I look forward to each new issue.

Jerry Rosen
Southside Records
Los Angeles, CA

Tony Peluso

Thank you finally unraveling one of the last great mysteries of the universe—who played the guitar solo on "Goodbye To Love"

[Classic Riffs, Aug. '01]. I was in junior high when that song came out, and, back then, the Carpenters were high on my list because slow dances were all seventh-grade boys knew. But that solo that would stick with me—especially as I was just starting to find my own way around a guitar neck. I have cited that work as a big inspiration to me, from both a compositional and tonal standpoint. However, no one could ever tell me who one of my first guitar heroes was until now.

Tony, thanks for listening to Richard Carpenter and really *playing* on that track. A few years later, when I got into radio, you gave me the only reason to really crank the monitors at the MOR station I was working at. I still steal your licks every time I play!

Ken Carver
Austin, Texas

Evolution

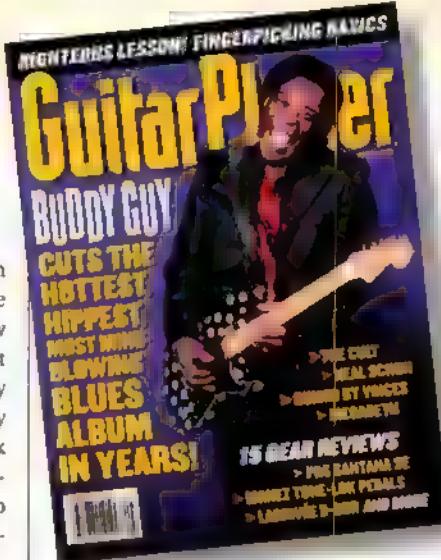
I've been reading *Guitar Player* for years, and I continue to enjoy your wide variety of features. However, I'm inspired to write regarding the negativity toward featured artists in your Feedback section. It's a free country, so you don't have to like what every artist is doing. However, to say that an artist is lacking in talent and ability because he isn't doing what he was doing 30 years ago is ludicrous. The artist who does not change, grow, and progress is the one with problems. Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and others who have been publicly flamed in these pages should be lauded for reaching a level of proficiency where they don't have to listen to what you and I say to make music. I would love to say, "Screw the critics—I'm playing what I want!" Wouldn't you?

You can always go back to your record collection and jam out to the oldies. And if you keep yourself firmly lodged in the past, I'm sure the ghosts of nostalgia will appreciate your company. The rest of us, however, will support artistic evolution regardless of how it fits our personal taste.

Paul Hunt
Lawrence, KS

Golden Years

I disagree with Mr. Altman about his claim of a "golden age of rock and roll" [Feedback,



Aug. '01]. I don't think one period of players can blow away any other era's. And as for saying that only players of yesteryear developed their talents from a simple love of the instrument and an appreciation for those who came before them—well, that's simply an insult to everyone who has picked up a musical instrument after 1980. Who can say that the famous musicians of today *don't* respect earlier artists?

In addition, I don't believe that musicians are obligated to say anything about social and political events. I think musicians are free to write about what affects them *personally*—whether that's global social change, growing up in a broken home, losing a girlfriend or boyfriend, or how to party.

By the way, I grew up in the '80s listening to Hendrix, Van Halen, Satriani, Vai, Clapton, Zeppelin, and the like. But I have an appreciation for the newer acts that move the music scene forward, even if I don't like the way they do it. After all, who says everyone is supposed to play and sound like the past masters?

Steven Loscutoff
Morgan Hill, CA

OOPS!

In Wayne Riker's Session, "Shapes of Things" [Aug. '01], we didn't mean to make things more difficult by writing the first three measures in 7/8. The triplets should have been made up of eighth-notes, not sixteenths. ■

Address correspondence to Feedback, c/o Guitar Player, 2800 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403, or e-mail us at guitplyr@musicplayer.com. GP regrets that until the advent of the 40-hour workday we will not be able to answer every letter.

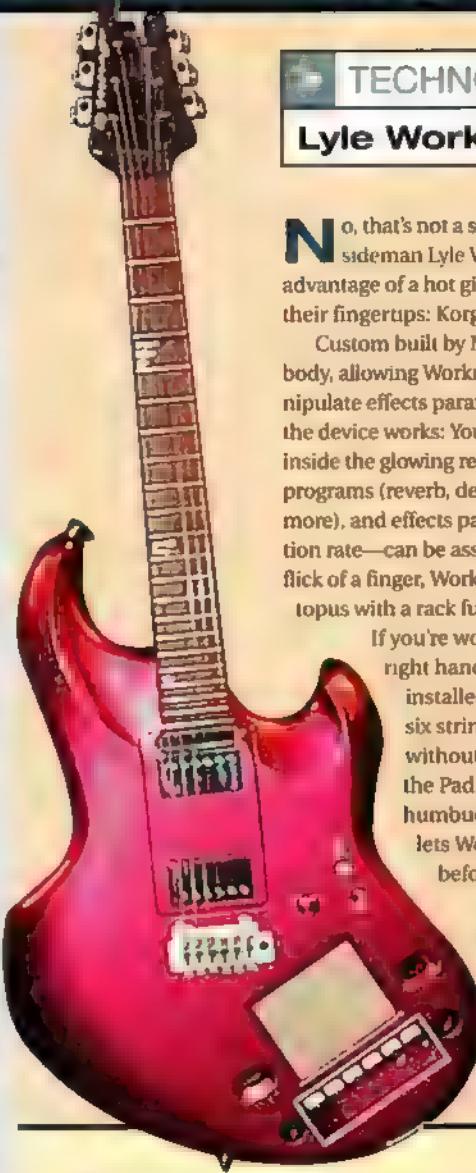
TOOLBOX*

>>> ESSENTIAL INFO FOR GUITARISTS

FRETWIRE*

JOURNEYMAN NO MORE: ERIC

Clapton has announced his present world tour—in support of his latest album, *Reptile*—will be his last. "The live thing doesn't work for me anymore," he says. "I'll always want to express something, but I don't need to do it like this." This is not the end of Clapton's recording career, however. Among planned projects are sessions with the **Impressions**, who he played with at the funeral of the band's original frontman, **Curly Mayfield**. . . . **MAYBE IT WAS THE FOG:** Former Dinosaur Jr. frontman **J. Mascis**, on a June European tour with his band, **the Fog**, was left with two broken vertebrae when his tour van was cut off by another vehicle and skidded off the highway. The group was on its way to Germany from Sweden when the accident occurred. Miraculously, an ambulance was right behind the van, and Mascis was rushed to a hospital in Halmstad, Sweden. The rest of the **Fog** sustained only minor scrapes and bruises. While Mascis is expected to make a full recovery, the remainder of the tour was cancelled. . . . **MISSING PERSONS FOUND:** Guitarist **Warren Cuccurullo**, vocalist **Dale Bozzio**, and drummer **Terry Bozzio**—founding members of '80s new wave band **Missing Persons**—are preparing for a reunion tour this fall. Formed in 1980 out of Frank Zappa's group, the reunited musicians will play their classic tunes, as well as new material currently in the works.



TECHNO TOOLS

Lyle Workman's "Kaotic Guitar"

No, that's not a screen for checking e-mail onstage. When imaginative Beck sideman Lyle Workman dreamed up this guitar, he simply wanted to take advantage of a hot gizmo that DJs, keyboardists, and live-sound mixers have at their fingertips: Korg's Kaoss Pad.

Custom built by MJ Guitars, this sci-fi 6-string has a Kaoss Pad built into its body, allowing Workman to use the processor's touch-sensitive X-Y grid to manipulate effects parameters without taking his hands off the guitar. Here's how the device works: You simply place one of your picking-hand fingers anywhere inside the glowing rectangle to tweak parameters. The Kaoss Pad includes 60 programs (reverb, delay, flange, chorus, ring modulation, gate, pitch shift, and more), and effects parameters—such as delay time and feedback and modulation rate—can be assigned to vertical and horizontal movements. With the flick of a finger, Workman can dramatically morph his tone in ways only an octopus with a rack full of signal processors could manage.

If you're wondering how Workman keeps the riffs going while his right hand is busy creating chaos, a Sustainiac Sustainer was also installed on the guitar. As if an Ebow were stretched across all six strings, the Sustainer lets Workman play and sustain notes without picking. A custom six-pin cable provides AC power to the Pad, and sends the signal from the guitar's two DiMarzio humbuckers to Workman's pedalboard. The two-way cable also lets Workman process his stompboxes through the Kaoss Pad before finally sending the signal to his amplifier.

If Workman's wild guitar seems like it's up your alley, the bummer is that, currently, his is the only one. But who knows, maybe someday soon you'll find this twisted ax available as a production model at a guitar store near you.

—JUDE GOLD



SITE READING Hearnet.com

In your never-ending search for the perfect guitar tone, have you ever wondered if your gear doesn't sound as good as it used to because your hearing has been damaged? Lectures on loudness are the last thing guitarists want, but remember this: Your ears don't come with a lifetime warranty. This is the message championed by H.E.A.R., which was started in 1988 by rock musician Kathy Peck and San Francisco physician Flash Gordon.

A visit to H.E.A.R.'s Web site will hip you to the following:

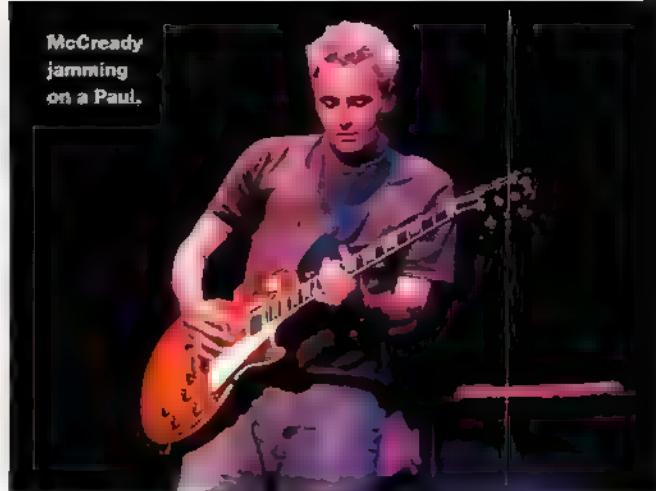
- Thirty-seven percent of rock musicians—and 52 percent of classical musicians—have measurable hearing loss.
- The maximum time before hearing is endangered at an exposure to 85dB—the noise level of busy city traffic—is eight hours. The bad news is the decibel scale is logarithmic, which means a mere 3dB increase in volume

> LIVE WIRES Pearl Jam

A true gear junkie, Pearl Jam's Mike McCready is constantly acquiring new toys. On tour, he drags five Gibsons (a '59 Les Paul Standard, two '59 Les Paul reissues, a '68 ES-335, and a '68 SG Junior), two Gretches (a Silver Jet reissue and a '60s 6120), three Fenders ('59 and '58 Strats, and a '68 Tele), and two '70s Ibanez Rocket Roll Vs. All his guitars are strung with GHS strings (gauged .010-.046), and he plays with

.88mm Dunlop Tortex picks. McCready's guitar signal is transmitted via a rackmounted Sony wireless system to his pedalboard, which contains a CryBaby, an MXR Phase 90, a Boss DM-3 delay, an Ernie Ball stereo volume pedal, and an Ibanez TS-9 Tube Screamer. The output from the Tube Screamer goes back to McCready's rack and into a Dunlop Univibe pedal that's kept offstage (the on/off and speed con-

McCready jamming on a Paul.



McCready's main cabs—a Marshall 4x12 and a Savage 2x12 combo—stage backup Orange 2x12 and Hiwatt 4x12 cabs.



Guitar tech Jeff Ousley's off-stage monitor—a Fender reissue Bassman.



McCready's pedalboard.



McCready's Marshall Super Lead head with rack-mounted Matchless HC30s, a VHT Classic power amp, and other rack gear.

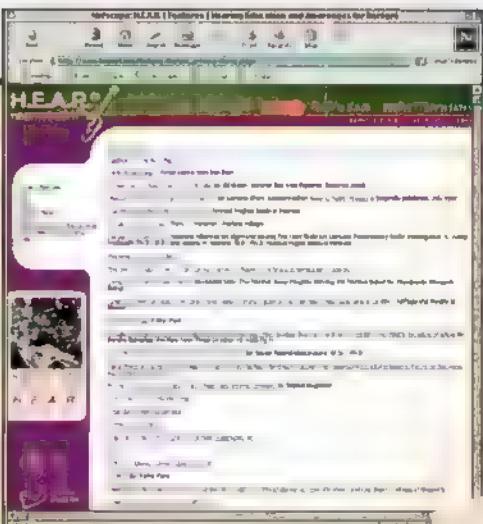


A view of McCready's 6-string site backstage.

doubles sound intensity. Therefore, a four-hour dose of sound at 88dB is roughly the same as an eight-hour dose at 85dB. At 110dB, the recommended maximum exposure time is a minute and a half. The volume of live music is typically between 90dB and 130dB.

• Blaring guitars don't just damage hearing. Studies show that excessive volume can alter your heart rate, vision, and reaction time.

But Hearnet offers a lot more than sobering statistics and an online store (where you can buy everything from cheapo foam earplugs to pricey, custom-molded models). You also get a wealth of information on allergy-related hearing loss, diet-controlled treatment of tinnitus, alternative therapies for hearing health, and more. Preserve your biggest musical assets—surf to Hearnet.com right now! —SHAWN HAMMOND

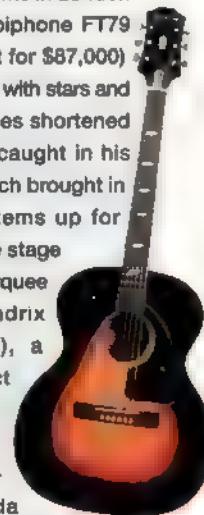


FRETWIRE*

Cuccurullo, who has been with **Duran Duran** since 1986, recently announced that he, singer **Simon LeBon**, and keyboardist **Nick Rhodes**, had completed "the last chapter" of Duran's trio format. LeBon and Rhodes have reunited with original Duran members **Andy Taylor** (guitar), **John Taylor** (bass), and **Roger Taylor** (drums), and will release a new album in 2002. . . . **ALL ALONG THE AUCTION BLOCKS** Jimi Hendrix saw the close of one of the first auctions dedicated to the memorabilia of **Jimi Hendrix**. Among the relics sold at the Bonham and Brooks auction rooms in London were Hendrix's Epiphone FT79 guitar (which went for \$87,000) and a shirt adorned with stars and stripes (with sleeves shortened so as not to get caught in his guitar strings), which brought in \$22,000. Other items up for grabs included the stage

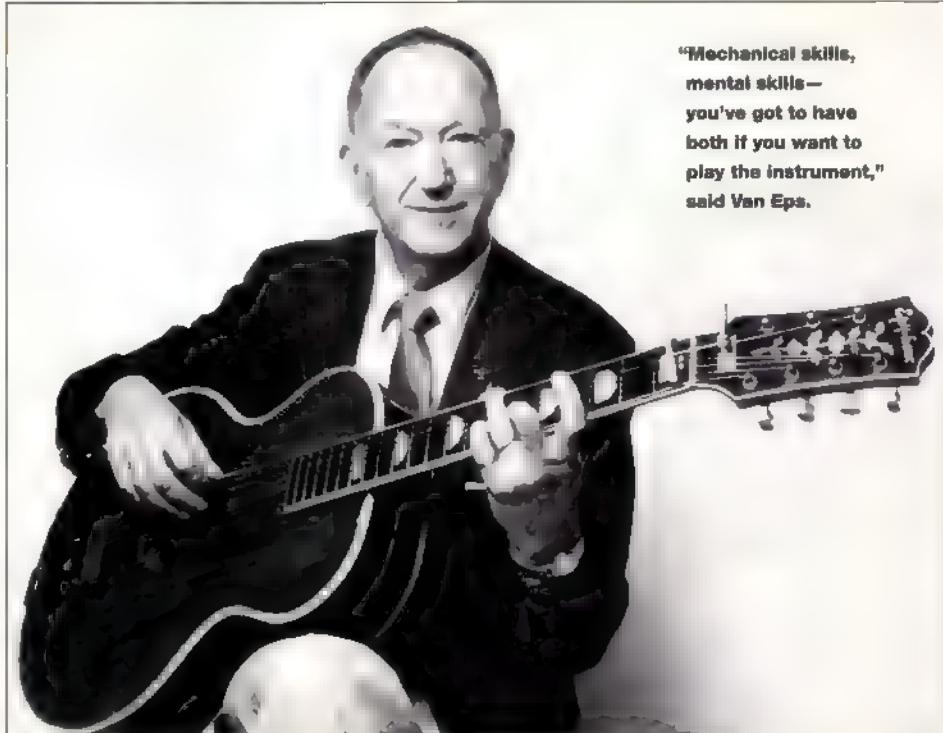
from London's Marquee Club (where Hendrix played in 1967), a recording contract the guitarist signed in 1966, and unpublished photographs by Linda McCartney. Part of the \$272,000 in proceeds went to benefit **DrugScope**, a London-based charity that focuses on drug education. . . . **THE END OF GUITAR AS WE KNOW IT?**

Retail giant **Guitar Center** hosted its annual **Guitarmageddon** competition on June 16 at the Experience Music Project in Seattle. Selected from more than 2,000 contestants, eight finalists battled it out onstage. The winner, Jimmy



Hendrix's Epiphone FT79, owned from late 1967 to spring 1970.

▶ HEROES George Van Eps



"Mechanical skills, mental skills—you've got to have both if you want to play the instrument," said Van Eps.

When George Van Eps ordered a custom 7-string from Epiphone in 1938, he became the earliest known jazz guitarist to add a seventh string (a low A) to an archtop. As he told *GP* in '94, the extra string gave him a wider chordal range in any position: "I could play a low F in the middle of the fingerboard, and still have access to everything right up to high F on the first string."

Van Eps had an astute understanding of harmony, and a uniquely contrapuntal conception. In his hands, a chord wasn't an inert grip, but a choir of independent voices that could move in any direction at any time. His style set him apart, especially in the '40s and '50s, when most guitarists—inspired by the newly electrified instrument's potential for dynamic melodic expression—were honing their soloing chops.

Van Eps' most enduring contributions to the jazz guitar pantheon are his chord exercises. Each exercise isolates a specific progression, and one or more notes in each chord move melodically against the static notes. After practicing these workouts for decades, Van

Eps published them in the 1980s as a three-volume instructional series entitled *Harmonic Mechanisms* (Mel Bay). Hordes of hungry jazzers, from 8-string modernist Charlie Hunter to traditionalist Howard Alden, gobbled up the lessons and incorporated them into their styles.

"In transcribing songs from George's records and studying solo pieces he wrote for 6-string," said Alden, "I've found that one measure of his music can serve as an entire lesson on bass lines, moving inner voices, and reharmonization."

Few of Van Eps' early albums are currently available, but his '56 classic, *Mellow Guitar*, has been reissued on CD. The disc features Van Eps in a variety of settings—from guitar-and-bongos duets to full band-plus-woodwinds orchestrations—and there are solo-guitar passages throughout. "What Is This Thing Called Love" and "The Boy Next Door" offer particularly remarkable examples of his guitar mastery. Van Eps continued to perform until shortly before his death in 1998. He was 85.

—ADAM LEVY



Virtuoso Nigel Tufnel demands a guitar that is flashy, functional, and powerful enough to drive one of England's loudest bands—Spinal Tap. To that end, the Ernie Ball/Music Man company created Tufnel's custom Hot Rod. Sporting a speedster-yellow and sparkle-flame finish and the cigar-chomping woodpecker logo made famous by Clay Smith Cams, the Hot Rod revs through four custom DiMarzio humbuckers—each of which has an on/off switch and colored, drag-strip-style indicator lights to show which pickup is active. Four chrome-plated headers under the pickups safely channel smoke from burning licks away from the guitar.

The humbuckers are positioned $6\frac{1}{32}$ " from the strings at the neck pickup, and $3\frac{1}{32}$ " at the bridge pickup. The only other control is a master volume knob that looks like a tire. Pulling up on the volume knob activates the light in the top-mounted tachometer. (Tufnel says the tachometer makes the guitar louder and keeps him from doing any "serious damage" to the guitar—or to himself.)

Tufnel keeps his Ernie Ball strings

(gauged .010-.046) a healthy $6\frac{1}{32}$ " above the 12th fret, with $.020$ " of relief in the neck. The maple neck features 22 frets that measure $.094" \times .048"$. In addition, the fretboard features upside-down position markers that point out the corresponding E-string notes—which make it easier for Tufnel to find the "saddest of all keys," D minor.

The Hot Rod weighs in at 9 lbs, which, according to Tufnel, contributes to its Stonehenge-sized volume. For maximum torque, the legendary axman relies on a recessed, Floyd Rose-licensed bridge equipped with a hot-rod-style gearshift arm and an eight-ball handle.

—GARY BRAWER, *brawer.com*



Tracking "It's Alright"

Album: *Flowers* by Echo and the

Bunnymen (SpinArt)

Parts: Intro and chorus lines

Guitarist: Will Sergeant

Guitar: Fender Jaguar

Tuning: Standard

Amp Modeler: Line 6 Pod

Effects: Roland ME-10 (for echo and phaser)

Strings: Rotosound, .009 set

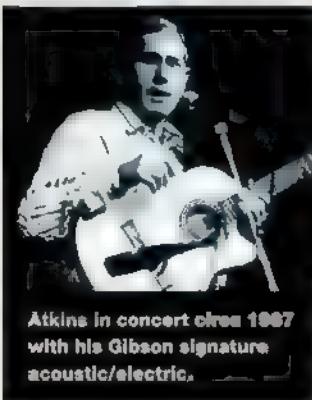
Signal Chain: The band used two recording mediums—a 24-track analog deck and a Tascam DA-88—and transferred tracks to Pro Tools for editing. For "It's Alright," Sergeant plugged his Jaguar into the ME-10 and Pod (set to the Brit Classic patch), and routed the signal direct to the recording console.

Creative Concept: "My biggest thing is creating an atmosphere," says Sergeant. "Oh yeah, and knowing when to shut up, as well. One of my favorite solos is on 'Boredom' by the Buzzcocks—it's just two notes. You don't have to play loads of notes if you can make the guitar sustain. Space is good. On 'It's Alright' the line just happened. Even on the early demos, I always gravitated to that riff. I didn't think about it too much—it's just what I do. I really like those big swirly sounds."

—MICHAEL MOLENDA

FRETWIRE*

Patton of Vista, California, walked away with a 2001 Harley Davidson and thousands of dollars in gear. The event also included performances by **Reeves Gabrels** and **Steve Val**. For info on how to enter next year's competition, check out guitarcenter.com. . . . **PASSING NOTES:** After battling cancer for three decades, legendary country guitarist **Chet Atkins** passed away at his home in Nashville on June 30. He was 77. Throughout his career, Atkins recorded 75 albums, held an executive position with RCA



Atkins in concert circa 1967 with his Gibson signature acoustic/electric.

Records for nearly two decades, and played a major role in crafting the "Nashville Sound." Look for a full-length feature next issue. . . . **Roy Nichols**, who played guitar in Merle Haggard's band for 22 years, died on July 3 after being hospitalized with kidney inflammation. He was 68. For more about Nichols's life and influence, check out GP's May 2001 feature. . . .

CELEBRATING SONGWRITERS: The 32nd Annual Songwriters Hall of Fame ceremony, held on June 14 in New York, included performances by **Elvis Costello** and **Willie Nelson**, and marked the inductions of Nelson, **Eric Clapton**, and **Dolly Parton** to the hall of fame.

EMILY FASTEN



> STREET SMARTS An Over-Speculated Deal

An artist rich in talent, but short on cash wanted to record a demo. He contacted a studio, and the owner offered a "spec" deal where he'd provide the studio—as well as engineering and producing services—free of charge. In exchange, when the artist signed a deal, he would be contractually bound to repay studio costs. Newly hip to a way to avoid out-of-pocket expenditures, the artist proceeded to make spec deals with everyone associated with his project.

Well, the completed project didn't result in a record contract, so the artist recorded a second demo in his home studio. That demo caught the ear of a label, and he got his deal. Unfortunately, the parties involved in the first demo now demanded payment for their services. After adding up the various "ten percents" he had promised to musicians, photographers, lawyers, and the studio owner, the artist discovered he'd *lose* money on his deal. Here's what

you can do to avoid such a hopeless situation:

Do the math. There's only 100 percent of a project to go around, so keep track of how much you're giving away.

Designate a specific trigger event. "When I get a deal" is too vague. A better contractual clause would read: "If, based on the services you've rendered, I sign a major-label artist agreement within six months, you'll get. . . ."

Limit fees. Don't offer a support musician an ongoing percentage of your deal. Limit their pay day to a dollar figure comparable to the market value of his or her services. You can also work out trade deals ("I'll sing at your gig if you play on my demo"), and consider that it's often better to pay for services upfront, rather than divvy up a pie that doesn't exist yet.

Be realistic. The biggest thing to keep in mind is the old saying, "You never get something for nothing"—even with spec deals.

—MICHAEL ACZON

> LEARNING CURVE 50 Licks Country Style

Boasting session credits with the likes of Randy Travis, Bonnie Raitt, James Taylor, and Don Henley, Troy Dexter is plenty qualified to show would-be twangsters the ropes on *50 Licks Country Style* (\$15). But don't let the video's "country" label fool you—Dexter and his customized Tele roam the stylistic range,

brandishing blazing Nashville-style licks, western-swing moves, and R&B-flavored riffs. Each of the 50 licks is played at normal speed, and then a couple of times at slower tempos. And if the split-screen views don't illuminate things well enough for you, the included booklet spells out each lick in tablature.

SONG CRAFT Jay Barclay

Guitarist Jay Barclay is a member of *Miss Fortune*, which was recently proclaimed one of Boston's most outstanding local bands by The Boston Herald. Earlier this year, *Miss Fortune* licensed its entire, self-titled debut album to MTV for use on the hit show *Undressed*. —SHAWN HAMMOND

"When we went into the studio, many of our songs had extra bridges, extended choruses, and several guitar-solo sections," says Barclay. "At the time, I was really attached to all those parts, but our producer made me realize it served the songs better to cut them out. I learned you have to strike a balance between pop craftsmanship and musicianship—and pop craft means slashing everything until you get to what's good about the song."

"On the other hand, I'd hate to say a pop song can only be verse, chorus, verse, chorus, and maybe a bridge. Some of my favorite songs go off in a lot of weird directions. For example, we're doing a cover of 'Under Pressure' by Queen and David Bowie, and that tune has a lot of parts and a very strange arrangement. But it's so loaded with hooks—and it's based upon such a cohesive thought—that everything works."

Although Dexter's narration is a little humdrum, his playing is stellar, and he does a great job explaining subtleties such as ghost notes, hybrid picking, false harmonics, and the importance of getting bends in tune. Halfway through the video, there's a nice change of pace when Dexter straps on a Les Paul, works



"Every time you write a new song, you should remember what you learned from the last song you wrote," says Barclay.

his way through several pedal steel-style licks, and explains how to use a volume pedal effectively. *50 Licks Country Style* is perfect for putting a little drawl in your playing.

Starlicks (dist. by Hal Leonard), 7777 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53213; (310) 235-4700, halleonard.com. —SHAWN HAMMOND



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Marshall VALVESTATE AVT

New Gear

By Emily Fasten



1. BRIAN MOORE

Brain Moore Guitars has expanded its i2000 line to include the i2p (\$1,695)—an RMC piezo-equipped model that lets you blend the magnetic pickup and piezo signals, or use each sound independently. The single-cutaway model has a maple top, a Kalantas mahogany body and neck, and a rosewood fretboard. Hardware includes Sey-

mour Duncan pickups with gold-plated covers and Sperzel locking tuners. The i2p is available in natural, tobacco sunburst, and cherry sunburst (pictured). Brian Moore Guitars, Box 540, LaGrangeville, NY 12540; (845) 486-0744; brianmooreguitars.com.

2. CRATE

The GFX212T amp (\$600) features two custom 12" speak-

ers, 120 watts of power, and the "Evolution Five" preamp, which purportedly replicates the tone of a tube amp. A channel tracking function makes it possible to assign different digital effects to each of the amp's three channels. You can choose from six individual effects (including octave and touch-wah) or ten multi-effects patches, and a three-button footswitch enables you to switch be-

tween Gain 1 (rhythm), Gain 2 (solo), and Clean. Crate, dist. by St. Louis Music, 1400 Ferguson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63133; (314) 727-4512; cratamps.com.

3. PLANET WAVES

The newest additions to Planet Waves' cable line are the in-line (\$10) and offset (\$11) 1/4" to 1/4" male adapters. Featuring gold-plated plugs, compression springs (to hold the plugs in their jacks), and ergonomically designed bodies, the adapters are 100 percent shielded and come with a lifetime guarantee. Planet Waves, 595 Smith St., Farmingdale, NY 11735; (631) 439-3300; planetwaves.com



GUITAR ON A STIK

Guitar On A Stik guitar stands (five-guitar configuration, \$175; three-guitar, \$135) alleviate the clutter of multiple stands by vertically stacking up to five horizontally mounted guitars on a freestanding, tower-like base. The tower is made of a lightweight, anodized aluminum alloy, and it features WaistGrabbers, which hold your guitars snugly around the middle. **Guitar On A Stik**, Box 12934, La Jolla, CA 92039; (858) 587-0803; guitaronastik.com

SIEGMUND

The Midnight Blues all-tube amp (\$1,475-\$2,170) is available as a head, a 2x12 combo, and a rackmount, and each model accepts EL34, 5881, KT66, 6L6GC, or EL84 power tubes. Among its groovy features are its choice of reverse-engineered transformers—either a 50-watt version similar to a '68 Marshall, or a 38-watt version like the ones in vintage Marshall JTM 45s.

Controls include a switchable rectifier (tube or solid-state), gain and drive knobs, a "true bypass" master volume, and adjustable output-tube *and* preamp-tube bias. Other options include two preamp versions—one with a parallel effects loop, the other with spring reverb and a post-preamp effects loop—and open- or closed-back cabinets (combo only). Each amp is handmade, and the combo is available with Weber VST Bulldog speakers or Celestion Greenbacks, G12Hs, or Blues. Siegmund Guitars, 10336 Wilsey Ave, Tujunga, CA 91042; (818) 353-5558; siegmundguitars.com.



4. ELECTRO-HARMONIX

New to the Electro-Harmonix line of vacuum tubes is the 6550EH (\$35 each, \$71 for a pair), which can be used in place of 6550 or KT88 output tubes. Each tube cranks out up to 44 watts and features phosphor-bronze side rods in the grid and



screen, triple mica supports, and a large bottle for more efficient cooling. Electro-Harmonix, 20 Cooper Sq., New York, NY 10003; (212) 529-0466, ehx.com.

5. JACQUES STOMPBOXES

Jacques Stompboxes are handmade, and feature point-to-point wiring and true-bypass

switching. The Fuse Blower fuzz (pictured, \$140) allows complicated chords to retain definition, and its Blow mode is designed to replicate the sound of a cranked Hiwatt amp. The Mercer Box (pictured, \$150) is fueled by two "tone-selected" germanium transistors, and is designed to emulate the sound

of a plexi Marshall. The Spin Archer rotating-speaker simulator (\$150) is a high-gain, light-activated device, and the Sleep Talker (\$140) is made for one thing—serious crunch. Jacques Stompboxes, 361 Avenue Mireille Lauze, 13011 Marseille, France; 33 49 135 3030; ts808.com.

B-BAND

The B-Band AST acoustic soundboard transducer (\$150) provides a sound similar to a studio mic, but allows you to use higher gain settings without feedback problems. Attached internally on the bridge or soundboard using putty, the AST comes complete with an endpin preamp, and the unit also includes a second input for an optional soundhole condenser mic. B-Band, 11125 Weddington St., North Hollywood, CA 91601; (818) 508-9412; b-band.com.



New Gear



LEHLE

Handmade in Germany, Lehle switcher boxes are housed in thick metal and feature gold-plated relays to keep noise, signal loss, and tone alteration to a minimum. The Lehle Dual (pictured, \$280) lets you switch between two amps, or run your signal to both. The 1@3 (\$250) allows you to switch between three amps, or two amps and one loop. The 3@1 (\$250) lets you route three instruments to one amp, and features two parallel outputs, one of which can be used for a tuner.

Lehle, dist. by European Musical Imports, Box 68, Hillsdale, NJ 07642, (201) 594-0817; europeanmusical.com.



7

7. EPIPHONE

As part of their new E Series of guitar gear, Epiphone presents the Galaxy 10 (\$379), a 10-watt, class A, 6L6-powered tube amp that features a 10" Electar Labs speaker, a 3-band EQ, and gain and volume controls. Details include on/off

and standby toggle switches, and a voltage selector switch that lets you operate overseas or stateside. The classy, retro-style cabinet is available in blue or black. Epiphone, dist. by Gibson, 309 Plus Park Blvd., Nashville, TN 37217; (615) 871-4500; epiphone.com.

8. MORTORO GUITARS

Gary Mortoro's newest model, Il Piccolo Storno ("The Small Starling"—base price, \$4,000), has a 25"-scale ebony fretboard and is available in acoustic and electric versions. The acoustic version has a Kent Armstrong pickup and an ebony pickguard, tailpiece, and bridge. The electric fea-

tures a stop-tailpiece and Seymour Duncan pickups (the model shown sports an Alnico II Pro and a Pearly Gates). Each guitar is available in a variety of woods, colors, and inlays, and includes a Cedar Creek hardshell case. Mortoro Guitars, Box 161225, Miami, FL 33116; (305) 238-7947; e-mail: mortorogtr@aol.com.



8

ELECTAR

The PBX-1000 Pedal Board (\$100) lets you attach ten or more effects to its Velcro-sheeted panel, and includes a master wall-wart that provides power to ten 9-volt DC outlets. The board's integrated patch bay includes a tuner out jack, two effects loops, and two amp loops for multi-amp setups. The PBX-1000 is made of flight-case material with an extruded-aluminum frame, metal corners, and lockable latches. Electar, dist. by MusicYo, 1840 41st Ave. #102, Capitola, CA 95010; musicyo.com.



SHUBB

The Shubb Company introduces a new, ergonomic string-winder (\$10) that resembles a chess piece, and is designed to be smooth and efficient.

Shubb, 14471 Highway One, Valley Ford CA 94972; (707) 876-3001; shubb.com.

10. AUSTIN GUITARS

Austin Guitars introduces the Era '62 Standard (\$249), which features single-coil pickups for bluesy wall and country-style twang. The guitar has a solid hardwood body, a maple neck and a rosewood fretboard, an adjustable bridge, and die-cast tuners. The Standard comes in either cream or red. **Austin Guitars**, dist. by St. Louis Music, 1400 Ferguson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63133; (314) 727-2512; stlouismusic.com

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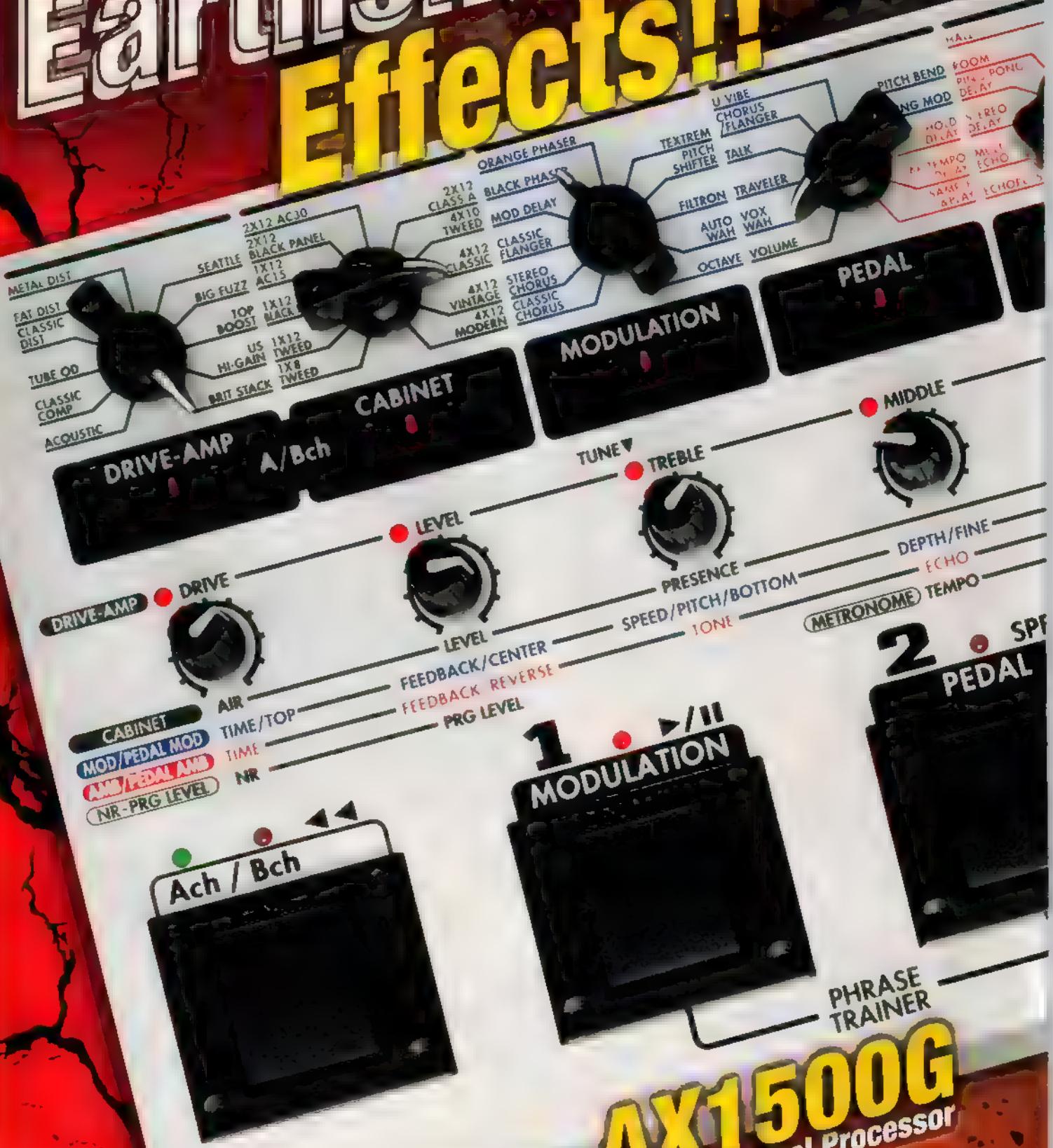


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Guyatone's new additions to its line of Micro Effects all feature stamped steel chassis, 9-volt or AC power, silent switching, and an LED indicator. The MD-3 Micro Digital Delay (\$150) features 2.6 seconds of delay time, low noise, and a phase-cancellation circuit. The ME-2 Micro Equalizer (\$130) is a 5-band graphic EQ with 15dB of boost/cut per frequency band. The PS-3 Phase Shifter (\$110) is a four-stage analog phase shifter with an asymmetrical sweep pattern and rate and depth controls. The SD-2 Sustainer "D" (\$90) offers compression and distortion with level and gain controls. Finally, the NR-2 Noise Reduction helps eliminate unwanted line noise, and features a variable threshold control. **Guyatone**, dist. by Godlyke, Box 4677, Wayne, NJ 07474; (973) 835-2100; guyatone.com.



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John Lee Hooker

1920-2001



"He had something that sounded so good you had to pat your feet and dance to it," says Buddy Guy of Hooker.

By the GP Staff

Locked within the undulating sexuality of John Lee Hooker's grooves were sense memories of smoke-filled stab-and-dance blues shacks, liquor-soaked despair, and kiss-my-ass exuberance. He connected listeners to the primal origins of the blues, and he stayed true to his muse's raw power until his death from natural causes at 80.

Statistics such as his 1990 platinum album, *The Healer*, and

his 1991 induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame are just datastreams. Here are some of Hooker's compatriots weighing in with flesh-and-blood remembrances of a true legend.

MICHAEL MOLENDA

B.B. KING

John Lee Hooker was a friend for over 50 years. He started playing before I did, and he was popular long before I was. When I

think of John, I think of "Boogie Chillen." He was a one of a kind—nobody played like John Lee Hooker, and nobody sang like John Lee Hooker. He didn't seem to try to play like anybody else, either. I first met John in the '50s. He invited me to dinner at his home in Detroit, and we talked, played music, and listened to records. John was traveling around quite a lot at that time, and may have been playing some of the same places we play to-

day—he was that popular. John was a great talent. I think he deserved much more than he got.

BUDDY GUY

The first thing I ever learned how to play was "Boogie Chillen." I woke up my sisters and brothers, and my mom and dad ran me out of the house for making all that noise. I said to myself, "I've got it, but if I stop, I ain't going to remember how to play it." So I played it for six

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John Lee Hooker

hours! I had John laughing from the day I met him with that story.

I was too choked up to say something at his funeral, but I wanted to. I was watching a baseball game on TV recently, and between innings they played John Lee's music. That made me think about something my mother said: "Son, if you've got flowers for me, give them to me now so I can smell them. I'm not going to smell them when I'm gone." I just wish John could have heard his music being played between the innings. When John started playing, they just did it for a smile and a drink of whiskey, and he became an important part of all the music you hear today. He's a part of what I play every day, man.

TAJ MAHAL

John Lee Hooker's passing is so significant because he was one of the last of the major forces that helped shape not only American music, but the modern music of the world. John Lee had an organic way of putting notes together that really brought a lot of feeling out in people. It showed you that the individual could triumph, and that's something I really loved about John Lee Hooker. He made no pretenses about anything. He just played it the way he heard it, the way he thought it, and the way he saw it, and it was always wonderful. I really hope people don't just make his passing something only for the blues world, because it's something for the music world.

DOYLE BRAMHALL II

John Lee Hooker was one of the key players who really turned blues into a different thing. He had such a unique style—if you listen to any of his early stuff, such as "Crawlin' King Snake," "Maudie," or "Dimples," you can hear that a good part of Keith Richards is a combination of John Lee Hooker and Chuck Berry. I got a lot from John Lee because he was just raw and low

down. He took a form of music that you could only hear in a church or an old, beat-up barn in Mississippi, and brought it to the masses.

BIG BILL MORGANFIELD

I almost felt like a member of my family had died. He and my dad were pretty tight with each other [Morganfield is Muddy Waters' son]. Those guys were among the deepest players that walked the planet. We lost what I call a true blues soldier.

John Lee Hooker's rhythms were very hypnotic. I have [bassist] Steve Gomes in my band, and he played with John Lee for five years. I said, "Man, how did you follow him? He doesn't seem to have a pattern. If you count 12 bars and expect John Lee to turn it around, it won't happen like that because he's just raw." Gomes said, "You just gotta know him. After a while, you just kind of feel when he's going to change."

TOMMY CASTRO

John Lee Hooker was an innovator. To the best of my knowledge, no one ever played that boogie feel on the guitar before him. Of course, the first band to come up with a big hit off of that riff was ZZ Top doing "La Grange."

Rich Kirch [Hooker's guitarist] liked to say that John was a young man in an old man's body. That's how I remember him. Up to a week before he died, he was still doing shows. He just really loved the music.

John Lee in GP

Here are the issues that John Lee Hooker has graced our pages. March '71, February '72, November '89, August '92, September '93, June '95, June '96, and March '99.

A sharp
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and a sly
smile—
Hooker
poses in
an early
publicity
shot.

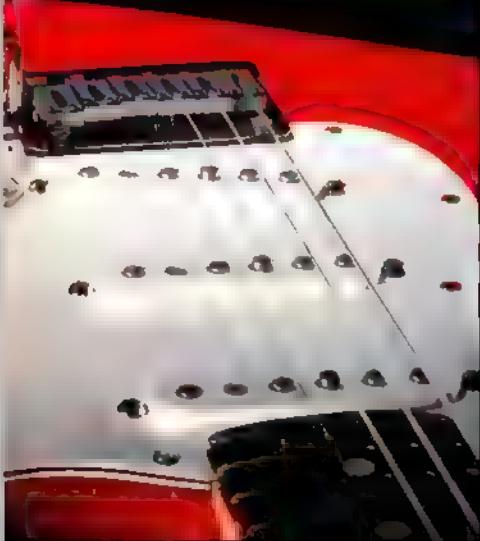
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Moke

John Hogg and Sean Genockey Mix It Up



"You finish the album and go on tour, and already the songs are different," says Hogg (center, Genockey is at left). "We're constantly changing them."

By Matt Blackett

With a sound that incorporated heavy guitars, high-strung acoustics, vocal harmonies, and quirky sound effects, Moke's self-titled debut garnered critical acclaim, but disappointing sales. But rather than change directions to chase success, the British quartet toured their brains out, honed their skills, and went back into the studio to record *Carnival* [Ultimatum].

"We're sticking to our guns,"

says singer/guitarist John Hogg. "We're doing what we've always done, but in an original way."

The new spin involved expanding Hogg's duties from solely acoustic parts to acoustic and electric performances, and enlisting the aid of producer Paul Stacey—who brought his arranging and guitar chops to the table. Now armed with the three-guitar attack of Hogg, co-guitarist Sean Genockey, and Stacey, Moke transformed *Carnival* into a multi-layered guitar fest. Cool tones

seduce—then clobber—the listener from all sides. The first single, "My Degeneration," is a good case study.

"The intro incorporates a guitar loop from the original song demo," says Genockey. "Then we layered two live guitars on top of that, with me playing a Gibson ES-335 and John playing an ES-330. I plugged into a SansAmp and an old Park tube amp, and John used the SansAmp and a Gibson Discovery amp."

The song's solo brings a different, more visceral tone into the fray. "I plugged a Les Paul Custom into an MXR Dyna Comp and a TLA preamp, and went straight into the mixing console," explains Genockey. "When you have a bunch of amps with a lot of room sound, it's nice to add a very dry, focused tone to the mix, and that's where the direct sound comes in. Going direct also makes you play in a different way because the tone can be really stark."

Moke

To create the rest of the sounds on the album, the Moke guys drew on Stacey's vast collection of gear. ("It was like being a kid again," enthuses Genockey. "It was out of control.") For "Hanging Around," Hogg played a Fender Jazzmaster through a 50-watt plexi Marshall. Genockey used a Les Paul plugged into a 1965 Fender Super Reverb and a Matchless DC30. "I miked the Super Reverb with a Sennheiser MD 421 and a Shure SM57, and used an Electro-Voice RE20 and an SM57 on the Matchless," he says. "Some of the parts were doubled, but

each pass was recorded with four mics, so it's more like *quadrupled*. In addition, the Super's 4x10 cab and the DC30's two 12s covered a huge tonal spectrum."

While Genockey and Hogg managed to layer multiple sounds without cluttering the mix, they don't take all the credit for the album's clarity, as multi-platinum producer Bob Clearmountain mixed *Carnival*. "If Bob didn't get how a part should fit in, he just took it out," says Genockey. "And you don't argue with a guy like him. Even if you disagree, you can't really say, 'What have you ever done, anyway?'"

To keep their layers distinct before the tracks ever get to the mixing stage, the gui-

tarists constantly look for new ways to double parts. "What we've been doing recently," explains Genockey, "is tracking guitars in different tunings, or putting a capo on one. It's easier to get a complementary sound that way. Some bands will have two guitarists play a part the exact same way, but you can get a real mush of frequencies that way."

With a love of layers and an openness to new arrangement ideas, it would seem that Moke would have a difficult time finishing a song. "Making a record is like starting 12 paintings at once," admits Hogg. "You sketch one out, fill it in, and when you can't really hear the tune going anywhere else, it's finished. It's like a solo. Sooner or later you know you've got to stop."

"Sometimes you instinctively know when to stop," offers Genockey, "and other times, you have to go overboard to find that point."

Soloing is one area where Genockey didn't go overboard on *Carnival*. "I love soloing, but some songs need it, and some songs don't," he says. "Anyway, there are a lot of dynamics and intricate countermeasures in our tunes to keep me occupied. I'll go out and get a blues gig if I start to worry that I can't solo anymore, but I get just as much enjoyment out of playing a rhythm part. It's all music to me."

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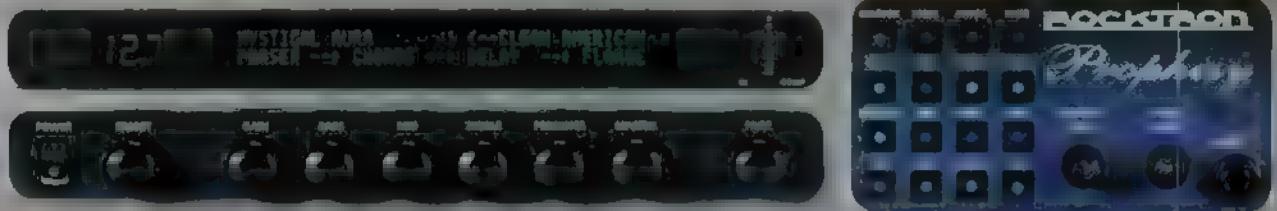
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Puya

Ramon Ortiz's Caribbean Crunch

By Joe Gore

You might think metal riffs and Latin rhythms go together like sauerkraut and salsa, but Puya's Puerto Rican prog-metal might just reorient your palate. On *Union* [MCA], guitarist Ramon Ortiz's relentlessly syncopated attack is heavy enough to satisfy the most bloodthirsty metalhead, yet nimble enough to groove with the rumba rhythms underlying many of Puya's riffs.

"We're always looking for the perfect riff that combines the aggression of heavy metal with the swing of Latin music," says Ortiz. "And we expanded the Latin influence on the new album by bringing in master Puerto Rican percussionists Cachete Maldonado and Anthony Carrillo. Although they had never played rock before, they understood what we were trying to do because of the common Puerto Rican thread. They have a vast knowledge of all the *toques*—the traditional rhythms—and we were happy with how the *rumba*, *bomba*, *plena*, and *son batá* blended with our riffs."

Ortiz's hybrid style evolved gradually. His first music teacher was his father, who played traditional music on guitar and



THRESHOLD

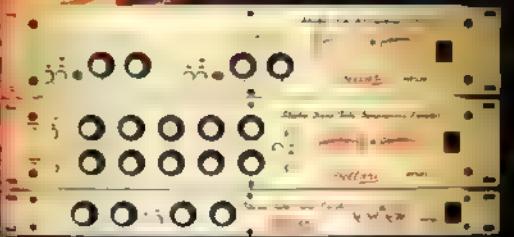
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Puya

cuatro. Later, Ortiz learned from records, took lessons from every accomplished rock and jazz player he could find, and studied classical guitar at a Puerto Rican conservatory. Despite Ortiz's stylistically varied tutelage, when Puya debuted a decade ago, they were a Rush-influenced prog-rock combo.

"We weren't that heavy until we moved to Ft. Lauderdale in the mid-'90s," says Ortiz. "We started playing with lots of death metal bands, but we never lost the vision of incorporating our Puerto Rican influence." As the Puya sound deepened, Ortiz adopted the Florida-metal practice of tuning low—first to *Eb*, then to *D*, then *C*, and then *B*. Now, he chiefly plays a custom-built Ibanez 7-string with a mahogany body, dual EMG humbuckers, and a floating tremolo. He drops the low *B* to *A*.

But Ortiz's tone is more tautly focused than that of other low-riding riffers. "A tight sound—especially in the low end—is essential for the kind of rhythms I play, so I scoop the midrange frequencies a bit," he notes. "I'm using Peavey 5150 amps on the road, and I'm very happy with them. But in the studio, I usually find I have to combine multiple amps to get a really blasting sound. For *Union*, I used the 5150, a Mesa/Boogie Triple Rectifier, an old Mesa 50 Caliber, a Marshall head, and an old Carvin X100. I always try to get an X100 when I'm recording, because the bottom end is so tight."

Ortiz's setup includes a Dunlop CryBaby, an Electro-Harmonix Small Stone phaser, and a Boss digital delay pedal, but he stresses that effects are side dishes, not main courses. "My basic sound is clean, punchy, and dry," he says. "Occasionally, I'll use an Ibanez Tube Screamer for solos, but usually I just stay on the 5150's lead channel and change my sound from the guitar. For clean sounds, I switch the neck humbucker to single-coil, and pull the volume knob back. That gives me a clean sound that isn't too crystalline—it still has an edge."

Ortiz, who now lives in Los Angeles, acknowledges the precedents for Puya's multicultural crunch. "Santana mixed in Latin rhythms—though his was more of a blues influence," he says. "Sepultura mixes metal with some of their Brazilian roots, and I'm especially influenced by System of a Down, who create an interesting combination of heavy metal and Middle Eastern-type singing. New influences like that keep heavy music fresh and evolving."

It's that maverick spirit that drives Ortiz to dispense unapologetically virtuosic shred solos. "I *love* solos," he says. "I grew up listening to great soloists such as Hendrix, Santana, Van Halen, and Randy Rhoads. Right now, the trend is *not* to play solos, but trends come and go. Instead of following trends, you should follow your heart."

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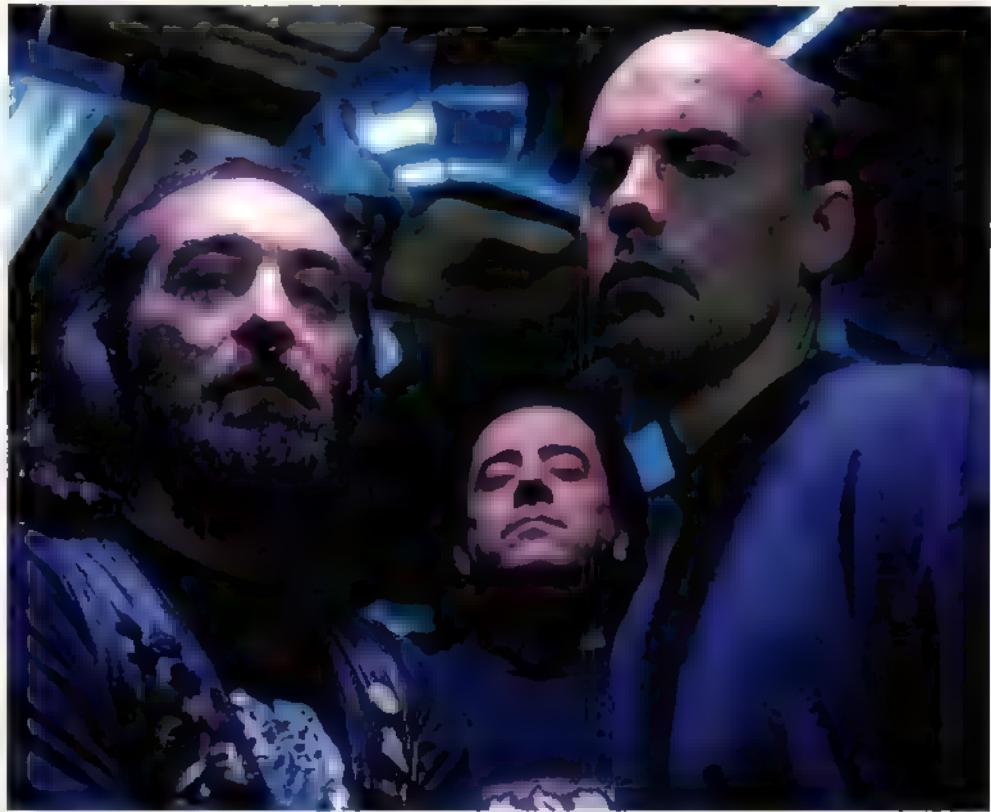
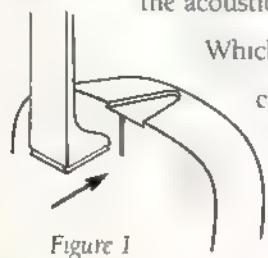


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Masters of Reality

Chris Goss' Transcendental Riff Rock



"The low frequencies of the acoustic guitar are being forgotten," says Goss. "I blame metal bands from the '80s, because they didn't want their acoustics feeding back onstage during their ballads."

By Darrin Fox

With *Welcome to the Western Lodge* [Spitfire], Masters of Reality guitarist/mastermind Chris Goss continues his penchant for melding melodic, riff-driven songs with otherworldly sonic molestations and vibey rhythms. "The way I play guitar is like self-hypnosis through repetition," says Goss. "I like to get lost in the music by playing a riff that falls into the groove so much that you

leave your body."

Goss' groove meditation reached its peak when legendary drummer Ginger Baker joined the group for 1993's stellar *Sunrise on the Sufferbus*. "Ginger and I jammed so well together because I love playing the same riff over and over," he says. "I'm proud to say I never played a Cream lick in front of him. I didn't meander and play a bunch of solos. The fun would come in when we would turn a riff upside

down and sideways. We wanted to see how many rhythmic ways we could approach a riff—it almost became like geometry. Ginger's whole kit would be revving like a Harley. It was this moving, mechanical rhythm."

With his obvious love for rhythm, the man Goss cites as his main rhythmic influence is surprising. "Believe it or not, it's Yes vocalist Jon Anderson," he says. "I think he's one of the 20th Century's most brilliant musi-

cians. To this day, I go see Yes and watch the rhythms he taps with his foot. In fact, I can trace the groove on 'Baby Mae' [from *Welcome to the Western Lodge*] directly to watching him. I could teach a course on that guy."

In addition to his rhythm chops, Goss' sonic manipulations on *Western Lodge* are mind-blowing. His admission that he's most comfortable holed-up in the studio is confirmed by the wanton experimentation

Masters of Reality

throughout the album. For example, "Annihilation of the Spirit" sounds as if it's on the verge of a Three Mile Island meltdown.

"For that tune, I ran the entire mix through a Marshall head," he says. "I cranked it through a 4x12 cabinet, mixed it, and then blended it with the normal mix. I think ideas like that come from pot and boredom."

It's rare to hear the same guitar sound twice on *Western Lodge*—which is surprising, as Goss admits he often uses the same setup. "My favorite combination is my '65 Tele that's loaded with DiMarzio X2N pickups through a Supro

combo," he says. "I collect Supros, and I always use small amps to record. If it's not a Supro, it's a Fender combo. Small amps are easier to move around, and their sound is easier to place in the mix than that of a really loud guitar amp. I got that from Jimmy Page—my art hero. I read about him using Supros, and I went out and bought my first one about 20 years ago. Take a Supro and a Tele, and you'll nick that *Led Zeppelin* sound perfectly."

Instead of different guitar/amp combinations, Goss will use either a Chandler Tube Driver or a Morley distortion to change tones. He also gets a lot of his fuzzy timbres by overdriving mic preamps. "A lot of my distortion comes from using gear wrong," he says.

Goss' sonic vision has made him a highly sought-after producer and engineer. He has already worked with the Stone Temple Pilots, Kyuss, and Queens of the Stone Age, and has composed several movie soundtracks. His love of recording and willingness to experiment have also given Goss a simple production philosophy.

"I like to listen to everyone's ideas and try them," he says. "You never know what's going to work. For instance, I recently tore apart my studio and haven't rebuilt it yet. So, I've been renting vacant houses for different records. I just move all my gear in, and the next thing I know, we're cutting vocals in the kitchen, and there are amps in the bathroom. It's easy to work that way if you're recording a good bunch of guys. When the combination of personalities is happening, it's a gas."



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Mr. Analog's Mistress

Although he has been a die-hard analog man, Goss recently joined the hard-disk recording world. Here are his thoughts on the format change. —DF

"Welcome to the *Western Lodge* was recorded on 2" analog tape," says Goss, "but the new Masters record I'm working on is all Pro Tools. I used to be 'Mr. Analog,' but there are a couple of reasons I've switched to Pro Tools. The biggest reason is that the sound of digital has come a long way. It's not as thin sounding as it used to be."

"Creatively, the advantages of hard-disk recording are huge. For example, say you're recording onto tape and you get stuck on a particular song. In order to move on to another tune, you have to abandon that mix, put up another reel of tape, and get a whole new mix happening. With all of that work staring you in the face, you're more liable to keep working on the same tune and get stuck even more. Digital recording allows you to easily jump from song to song. Then, when you come back and listen to a song with fresh ears, usually what's missing is very evident."

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Steve Howe

A Prog-Rock Pioneer Unplugs

By Shawn Hammond

Don't blame Steve Howe for the hordes of prog-rock disciples who turned the genre into something self-indulgent and goofy. Howe—perhaps the style's quintessential guitarist—produced technically and melodically brilliant work with Yes throughout the '70s. Proof of his originality and genius is the fact that, beginning in 1977, *Guitar Player* readers voted Howe Best Overall Guitarist five years in a row—making him the first player to sweep the reader's poll category and enter the Gallery of the Greats.

Besides his stellar electric performances on Yes hits such as "I've Seen All Good People," "Yours Is No Disgrace," and "Long Distance Runaround," Howe's graceful acoustic lines on those tunes are some of the earliest examples of flattop playing within a heavy rock context.

"At the time, not many people thought of playing acoustic—especially not acoustic harmonics, like I played on 'Roundabout'—with a band going at full-tilt," says Howe, who also stepped out with solo-acoustic numbers like the steel-string extravaganza "The Clap" and the gut-string suite "Mood for a Day."

Since the early '90s, Howe has worked in various Yes incarnations—all the while nursing his passion for acoustic playing. This



year, that passion culminated in the all-acoustic solo project *Natural Timbre* (Spitfire). "Over the last ten years, I've built up a bunch of solo pieces, so I knocked down and did an album that

excluded electric guitars," says Howe. "It was refreshing not having to worry about effecting, distorting, or putting spins on anything. And with an acoustic, you have to *really* be playing some-

thing to sound good."

Recorded primarily at his home studio on ADAT, *Timbre* finds Howe playing solo numbers and accompanied pieces that feature his son Dylan on

Steve Howe

drums, violinist Anna Palm, and pianist/multi-instrumentalist Andrew Jackman. To have a bounty of tonal colors available, Howe summoned 22 axes from his world-renowned collection of 95 stringed instruments. "I used three mics—a close stereo pair and a room mic—to capture the right tones," he says. "I usually placed one of the paired mics about a foot away from the 12th fret, and the other about a foot from the butt of the guitar. Both mics were angled in slightly. You can get a great sound with just one mic, but you have to be certain it isn't closer than a foot from the body—otherwise

you'll only hear one facet of the guitar's tone."

Howe's favorite mics for the sessions were AKG C414s, Sennheisers, and Electro-Voice RE20s in various arrangements. "It's tricky getting the sounds right when you're doing all this alone in your home studio," he says. "You have to play, and then stop and listen back to what you've recorded to see if you've captured a good sound. But I've found a great way to overcome all the going back and forth. I set up the mics, put on a good pair of headphones, sat in a chair that had wheels, and played as I rolled around the mic positions. When I heard the sweet spot, I stopped."

Though he owns an army of acoustic guitars,

Howe played most of *Timbre* on three favorites: a steel-string made by Dutch builder Theo Scharpach, a Kohno Model 10 classical guitar he bought in Japan in 1973, and a 1958 Martin 00-18. "I felt like I finally had a formidable sound when I bought the Martin in 1968, so I played acoustic *much* more from then on," Howe relates. "The only steel-string that really 'threatened' the Martin was the Scharpach—which I purchased 12 years ago. That guitar helped me go out and play solo because it's such a big-sounding, balanced guitar. Now I use the 00-18 for more familiar pieces, and the Scharpach for the newer solo material."

For those who blanch at the thought of 95 guitars, Howe freely admits his eccentricity. "I'd say any more than 50 is reasonably insane," he jokes. "But I got into collecting when I realized different guitars brought out different things in my playing. I grew up listening to Speedy West on steel guitar, and Segovia on Spanish guitar, but I also loved Chet Atkins and Big Bill Broonzy. All that music made me want to be a jack of all trades rather than a master of one. To me, playing different instruments and styles adds more dimension to your sound—it's like the difference between a black and white film and a Technicolor epic."

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Howe's guitar collection has graced exhibits such as last year's *Dangerous Curves: Art of the Guitar* at the Boston Museum of Fine Art. The instruments below were employed for *Natural Timbre*:

Gibsons: F-4 mandolin, K-4 mandocello, H-4 mandola, banjo-guitar, Country Western acoustic, F.D.H., and Steve Howe Custom

Martins: Martin 00-18 SH, Martin 00-18 SH (in Nashville tuning), 00-40H Hawaiian steel, J12-65M 12-string, and Style C mandolin.

Other Goodies: Autoharp, Dobro, Kohno Model 10 gut-string, Koto, Levin LTS5 12-string, Louis Panormo 1836 guitar, Portuguese 12-string, Radiotone alto guitar, Scharpach SKD steel-string, and Tanglewood bass.

—SH

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Pickups

Kelly Joe Phelps

It wasn't a conscious decision to avoid playing slide on the new record," says lap-style genius Kelly Joe Phelps, who already has three albums full of flawless, soulful slide playing under his belt. "The songs were simply coming out as straight guitar tunes, and because I'm not a prolific songwriter, I didn't want to get in the way of the creative process."

The result is *Sky Like A Broken Clock* (Rykodisc), an effort that finds Phelps deeply immersed in the world of fingerstyle guitar. "I've been listening to banjo players, of all things," he says. "Banjo players are able to keep a lot of exciting musical motion going. They create a sense of multiple lines and

rhythms, and it's mostly done with the right hand. Also, a lot of the chord voicings they use are limited to only two or three strings, so they play with a lot of implication."

There's also another first for Phelps on *Broken Clock*—he worked with a band. Not only that, but the recording process was all live. "In order to bring out the music with passion and conviction, I have to record with everyone playing together," he says. "I wanted to capture the way my singing makes the bass player react, or the way a drum fill causes me to react."

With his favorite acoustics—a 1947 Gibson J-45 and a National Style "O" resonator—Phelps played his new songs in



"The acoustic guitar has given me a realm of sensitivity I never found on electric," says Kelly Joe Phelps. "I'd rather the sound come out of my chest than have to pull it out of the amp."

standard tuning, open G, or a special sus-4 tuning. "I like to tune the guitar C, G, C, G, C, F because the tuning functions much like DADGAD," he explains. "It's that same roots and fifths thing with a fourth thrown in."

Another staple of Phelps' style is his clever use of open

strings. "Combining fretted notes with open strings broadens the guitar's textural palette," he says. "The open strings sustain longer, and create a beautiful, shifting tonal quality you don't get when you play a big, fat barre chord."

Though Phelps has already put in close to 30 years on the guitar, his musical odyssey seems to be just beginning. "What I decide to pull out of the guitar is not only based on many years of playing and woodshedding," he offers, "but also on a lot of other musical experiences. I studied jazz players. I played sax, trumpet, and trombone, as well as every stringed instrument I could get my hands on—including banjo, mandolin, and cello. Your guitar style comes from *all* of your experiences." —JUDE GOLD

Violet Indiana

Ex-Cocteau Twins guitarist Robin Guthrie is a master of the dream-pop canvas. His new duo, Violet Indiana, and new record, *Roulette* (In-
stinct/Bella Union), finds the Scottish-born musician sticking to what he does best—creating the shimmering soundscapes



"Nothing gets me off more than working all day in the studio making a piece of music that I think is brilliant," says Violet Indiana's Robin Guthrie (far left).

Pickups

that earned him legions of fans.

"It may sound like a conceited comparison," says Guthrie of his adherence to ambient stylings, "but nobody ever said to Picasso, 'Hey, why don't you do a landscape for a change? We're getting really fed up with all these messed-up faces!'"

However, there are signs on *Roulette* that Guthrie is evolving his approach to the guitar. "I'm experimenting with how strong the actual guitar parts are, as opposed to relying on sound to make them work," he says. "I guess I'm stepping out a bit."

While there is more articulation in Guthrie's playing, the dripping rainbows of guitar on *Roulette* will still delight Cocteau Twins fans—as will the ethereal vocals of his new musical partner, former Mono vocalist Siobhan De Maré.

"When I first heard her voice I thought, 'This is someone who needs to be let loose,'" says Guthrie. "It's gorgeous, passionate, and very emotive. I've just given it wings. And she'd never heard the Cocteau Twins before, which was a definite plus. She didn't come with any baggage."

When it comes to creating his dreamy guitarscapes, Guthrie makes the task sound easy. "I try to spread my parts around the audio

spectrum, so while there's actually a lot going on, the tune isn't cluttered," he explains. "I like to mix in some tracks very subtly so you don't actually hear them—like harmony parts, little noises, or swirls of stuff. If you expose everything, there's nothing left to sink into your subconscious."

Guthrie followers may be surprised to learn that he has put aside his arsenal of solidbodies for a Gretsch 6120. "Fenders are bright and don't have a very round bottom," he says, "but the Gretsch is quite complex, and I can control the sound a lot more. I can get warm, jazzy tones, and then hit a couple of switches, and suddenly the sound is really bright."

Guthrie also has a new amplifier—a Line 6 Flextone II. "I love the sound of the Flextone—they're bloody good amps," he says. "But if I were in a band where we played wall-of-sound loud all the time, I wouldn't use it, because you can't replicate the sound of a cranked-up Twin or Marshall stack with a modeling amp."

Perhaps it is Guthrie's new approach to the stage that most exemplifies his evolution—or devolution—as a musician. "The band is 100 percent live, rock and roll style," he says. "Aside from my guitar pedals, there's no technology onstage—no sequencers and no technicians running around setting up flight-cases full of gear. So much of what I'm doing

now is quite normal, and, for me, that normalcy is kind of new." —JUDE GOLD

Robbie McIntosh

Robbie McIntosh has lent his services to countless artists including Roger Daltrey, Manfred Mann, and Tears for Fears. He was also a member of the Pretenders during their "Middle of the Road"-era resurgence. And then there was his four-year gig recording and touring with Paul McCartney.

Even with all of that, McIntosh has found time to release three solo albums. His latest, *Wide Screen* (Compass), showcases his songwriting skills, singing, bass playing, and stellar guitar work. "Wide Screen has more variation to it than my *Emotional Bends* album, which was a little rootsier," says McIntosh.

That rootsy element is still prevalent on *Wide Screen*, however, with plenty of mandolin, old-school pedal steel (courtesy of bandmate Melvin Duffy), and McIntosh's driving acoustic rhythm work on his trusty Martin D-18.

"Acoustic guitars in rock music are indispensable," he says. "People don't realize how much acoustic there is in great rock songs like 'Brown Sugar' and 'Won't Get Fooled Again.' The acoustic acts like sonic putty, filling in the space between the bass and

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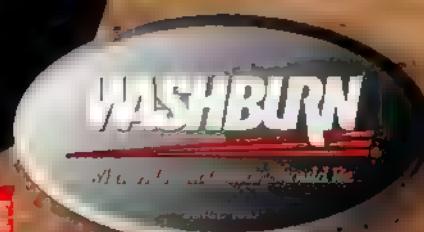
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PICKUPS

the electric guitar."

For his electric parts, McIntosh employed several guitars but relied primarily on one amp—a rare 20-watt, EL-84-powered Marshall. The amp is an old standby for McIntosh, who used it on "2000 Miles" and "Middle of the Road" with the Pretenders.

"It's a great sounding amp," he says. "I plugged a Music Man Silhouette with P-90s into it for the lead on 'Rat in a Hole.' I used a Gibson ES-345 on 'No Feeling for the Blues,' and I played my Epiphone Coronet through it for the slide solo to 'Fire and Flame.'"

Other textures on *Wide Screen* were provided by a mini-humbucker-equipped Les Paul Deluxe and a Strat in Nashville tuning. McIntosh ran the Strat through a Roland Dimension D rack processor before hitting the Marshall.

The sessions for *Wide Screen* went quickly—considering how McIntosh has been accustomed to working. "I've got a slightly different budget than what you have for a Pretenders or a McCartney record," he jokes. "So

we work about 100 times faster. The song 'Leap into Space' was recorded in about an hour. I recorded an acoustic guitar to a click track, put the drums down, and then the bass and electric guitar."

Part of the reason McIntosh could work so fast was because he was in charge. He wrote all the tunes, played many of the instruments, and co-produced the project. However, as a hired gun, he is also well practiced at situations where someone else calls the shots.

"It takes more time when you work with someone else, because you're trying to accommodate their vision, as well as your own," he says. "But I find it very rewarding to play different music with other people. I never thought I would get anything as spectacular as the McCartney gig, though. I love all those songs, and the fact that many of them had never been performed live made the tour historic. So as much as I love playing my own stuff, I still do a lot of session work. I'm like a carpenter who helps someone build a house by doing the windows. I really see that as my craft, and I'm proud of it."

—MATT BLACKETT



"A lot of session players lose their edge because they stop playing live," says sideman, session guitarist, and solo artist Robbie McIntosh. "That's why I still gig a lot."

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Buzz

Zen Guerrilla

All music has an element of regurgitation," says Zen Guerrilla guitarist Rich Millman. "You listen to old acoustic blues guys like Blind Willie McTell or Blind Lemon Jefferson, and you hear exactly where groups like the Stooges were coming from—they just made it louder."

Mix equal parts Stooges, MC5, and Delta blues and you'll get a good idea of what Zen Guerrilla brings to the party. The band's new record, *Shadows on the Sun* [Sub Pop], is a celebration of all that is righteous about rock and roll: raw, violent guitars. Although it's a simple recipe, Millman didn't always mix the right ingredients to make it work.

"Like any guitarist, I used to have a lot of fun playing with effects," he says. "Ultimately, I realized that with straight rock and roll your tone needs to be as raw as possible—that's what people respond to. It took me a long

time to figure that out. The most important thing is getting the guitar to cut through."

Millman's rig is a perfect conduit for sonic mayhem. "I plug my semi-hollow Yamaha into a Marshall JCM 900 and a Fender Montreux combo," he explains. "I run both amps at the same time. The Fender gives me a ton of high-end bite, and the Marshall gives me the lows and mids." Millman's only effects are a Pro Co Rat and an old Ibanez delay that he occasionally uses to enhance bursts of feedback.

"That pedal has been soaked in beer for 20 years," he says. "Each time it dries out, it makes a new noise."

In the 12 years since the band's inception, Zen Guerrilla have gone from playing basement parties and bars to huge European festivals, but the members actually prefer the dives. "When we're on festival bills, we still set up right next to each other



"Each decade, new groups inject something fresh into the blues/rock formula," says Zen Guerrilla's Rich Millman.

as if we're playing in a small bar without a stage," says Millman. "We never look back at the tiny joints we've played and thank God that we're not there anymore. Dank clubs are perfect for the style we play—it's like being at home." —DARRIN FOX



"We recorded this album ourselves because we wanted to take what we've learned over the years in the studio and put it to use," says Lupine Howl's Mike Mooney (far left).

Lupine Howl

We're a new band, but we're not a young band," states Lupine Howl guitarist Mike Mooney. When Mooney and singer/multi-instrumentalist Sean Cook were sacked from their previous band—the spacey noise-rockers Spiritualized—the two regrouped and released *The Carnivorous Lunar Activities of Lupine Howl* [Beggars Banquet]. The only catch was Mooney had to act as the project's producer, engineer, and guitarist.

"Juggling all those tasks was a little overwhelming," admits Mooney, who recorded *Carnivorous* with Mark of the Unicorn's Digital Performer at his flat in Bristol, England. "We took a computer, some software, and some good mics and just experimented. I sometimes struggled with the practical knowledge of the studio—things such as making sure the signal routing was correct and getting a good drum sound. Then I started questioning my judgment. I'd ask myself, 'Do I even know what a good drum sound is?' But when I listen to the record now, I'm pretty happy with it."

Carnivorous is a veritable tour de force of melodic space rock and raw guitar tones, with much of the album's sound derived from Mooney's days as a sought-after sideman. "I had to adapt to a lot of styles," he says. "I played with Julian Cope, Echo

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Buzz

and the Bunnymen, and the Psychedelic Furs. And each time I returned home after a tour with one of those artists, I couldn't help but play like they did. With the Bunnymen it was atmospheric stuff, with the Psychedelic Furs it was balls-to-the-wall rock, and the stuff with Julian Cope was just plain weird. The influences of those people are all over the new record."

Mooney used a variety of amps for *Carnivorous*, including a Fender Super Champ, a Marshall JCM 2000 DSL, a Laney combo, a Fender Showman, a Mesa/Boogie Heartbreaker, and a Pearce. His main guitars were a Strat, a Gibson Les Paul and lap steel, and a Lowden 12-string acoustic

Lupine Howl are already recording the follow-up to *Carnivorous*, and one operational change has made Mooney very happy. "We've involved an engineer and producer on this record," he explains. "Now we don't have to be so bothered with the technical aspects of the studio. We can concentrate on the music." —DARRIN FOX

Beulah

We're not a band that has to fill up space with a lot of guitar sounds," says Miles Kurosky, the primary guitarist, vocalist, and songwriter of San Francisco pop band Beulah. The six-member outfit forges a smooth '60s sound with orchestral arrangements inspired by the Beach Boys, the Beatles, and elements of the Velvet Underground

To help develop the expansive arrangements for Beulah's recent *The Coast Is Never Clear* (Velocette Records), Kurosky provided each band member with a 4-track tape of basic tracks so they could learn the material and develop parts. When the group brought all their ideas together, Kurosky orchestrated the songs, occasionally moving lines

around from instrument to instrument.

"Sometimes I'll hear a part played on piano, and think it would be a brilliant guitar line, or I'll hear a guitar part and think it would sound better on flute," he explains. "I often feel the other instruments are more important to the song, so I'll fit my guitar parts around them."

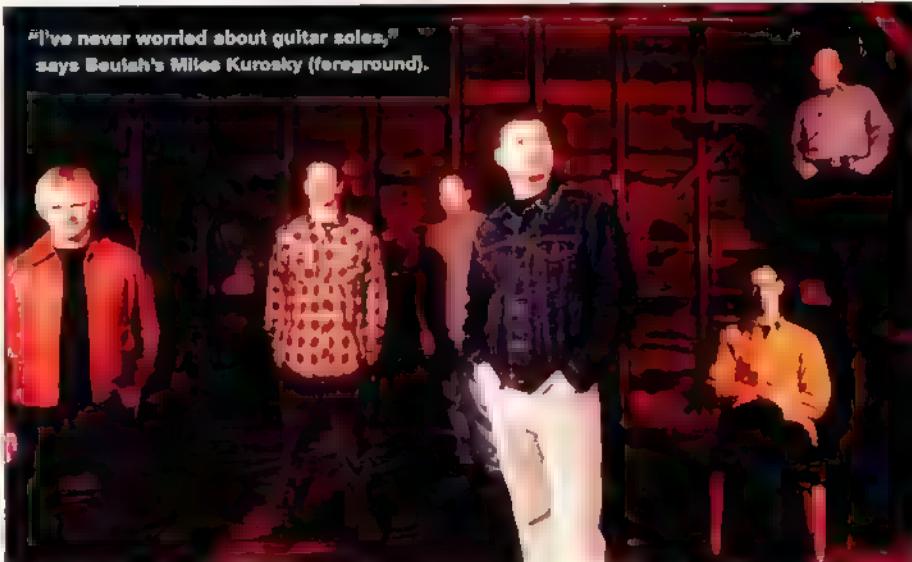
Kurosky's attitude towards guitar solos is similarly unselfish. "My thing is playing *rhythm* guitar," he asserts. "A solo break should only be included if it can add something meaningful to the music, and it should be played on whatever instrument best serves the needs of the song. I'm influenced more by people who just make noise with their guitars, so if it comes down to playing a guitar solo or scraping something against the strings, I definitely prefer to scrape the strings."

Although Kurosky handles the bulk of the guitar chores onstage, his bandmates had a hand in crafting the 6-string parts on the album. Bassist Steve La Follette played all the acoustic guitars, and keyboardist Patrick Noel played the country-style parts.

The guitars on *The Coast Is Never Clear* included Kurosky's Epiphone Dot and Casino, a Gibson ES-335 and I-45 acoustic, and a Fender Tele, a Jazzmaster, and two Strats. For amplification, the group used Kurosky's Fender Super Reverb, as well as an old 50-watt Marshall 1x12 combo, a Music Man head and an Ampeg cabinet, and an unidentified, solid-state practice amp with an 8" speaker. The group also dabbled with Line 6's Amp Farm and a variety of stompboxes that included DOD's Classic Fuzz and American Metal, Electro-Harmonix's Big Muff and Small Stone, a SansAmp PSA-1, an MXR Blue Box, and Danelectro and Boss overdrives.

With the variety of layers and sounds on the band's recordings, it can be tricky reproducing the songs live. Kurosky and company don't even try. "If we had to," he muses, "I think we could pull the album off as a three- or four-piece group, but it would be a more raw, punkier version of Beulah."

"I've never worried about guitar solos," says Beulah's Miles Kurosky (foreground).





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In the end, keeping the onstage instrumentation the same as what was on the recordings isn't imperative. It's the songs that matter." —JISA SHARKEY

Lifer

L'm into the Angus Young sound—loud and clear," says Lifer guitarist Aaron Fink. "I knew we were going to be lumped in with a lot of the new metal bands, so I wanted people to think, 'That sounds a little different than everybody else.'"

Melding modern-metal ferocity with welcome melodicism, the Pennsylvania-based Lifer may just bridge the gap for guitar nuts who can't quite hang with most aggro-metal bands. Produced by Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson, Lifer's eponymous debut (Republic) yields plenty of heavy guitars, but the band separates itself from the crowd in two ways: Singer Nick Coyle's melodies are actually (gasp!) beautiful, and Fink conjures crisp tones that allow his thundering riffs and rich arpeggio runs to ring out with sparkling definition.

"It's hard nowadays to do anything fresh," he says, "and I thought those tones would work better with the chord voicings I use—I don't always play the root and fifth."

Although he occasionally detunes, Fink has an interesting perspective on the low-rumble

"When I found out Alex Lifeson was going to produce our album, I was relieved," says Lifer's Aaron Fink (far left), "because I knew I'd be well taken care of."



trend. "I detune only as a last resort, because everybody does it now," he explains. "At this point, having a basic rock-guitar sound with a standard-tuned guitar stands out more than the hyped low stuff."

To record *Lifer*, Fink relied on a Fender '72 Thinline Tele reissue, a Paul Reed Smith CE22, and two Ibanez AX Series guitars. He also recorded with a PRS Singlecut and a Fender Strat provided by Lifeson. For acoustic shades he used a Washburn Golden Harvest. For effects, Fink plugged into a Lexicon MPX G2 (controlled via

an MPX RI footcontroller), and his main amps were a Hughes & Kettner Triamp and a Duotone.

Fink doesn't take many solos, opting instead to focus on his strengths. "I have a knack for doubling with exactness," he offers. "All the rhythm parts on the album were doubled, tripled, or quadrupled—but you can hardly tell they're different takes. That skill comes from listening to James Hetfield. When I heard Metallica's 'For Whom the Bell Tolls,' I knew I had to play rhythm guitar with that kind of precision."

—SHAWN ISAMMOND ■

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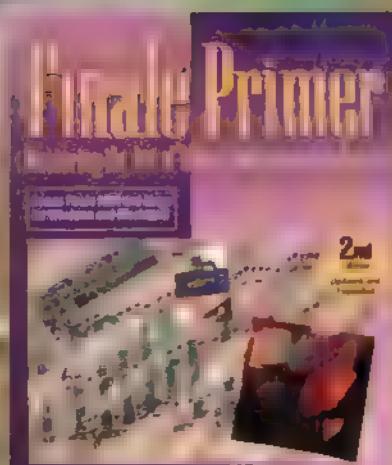
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BEHIND-THE-SCENES NEWS ON THE GUITAR BIZ



SUMMER NAMM REPORT

To a native San Franciscan—someone built to operate within a temperature range of 60 to 70 degrees—the brutal heat and humidity in Nashville during the city's Summer NAMM extravaganza is near lethal. However, the show always unveils enough kick-ass new gear to offset the discomfort of turning into a sweat monkey. At this show, for example, modeling technology kicked into the next generation as Line 6 and Vox debuted high-powered digital amps.

Line 6's Vetta (offered in stereo 100-watt, 2x12 combo and stereo 200-watt head configurations for \$2,399 each; the FBX Foot Controller is \$599) encapsulates the signal paths of live and recorded guitar tones. In addition to amp and cabinet emulations, the Vetta includes vintage stompbox models and studio effects, as well as the ability to run two amp models simultaneously.

Vox's Valvetronix was unveiled with live club performances by Korg's Nick Bowcott (former Grim Reaper axeman and Beavis & Butt-head whipping boy) and super-sideman John Jorgenson. The hybrid Valvetronix (the AD60VT 1x12 combo is \$899, the AD120VT 2x12 is \$1199) serves up digital effects and amp and stompbox models, but adds a 12AX7 tube coupled to an output transformer.

UP TO THE MINUTE

To deliver up-to-the-minute scoops to GP readers, the staff

compiled this short list of highlights on the plane trip home. For more info on all the cool stuff, stay tuned to future New Gear announcements and Bench Tests.

BC Rich: Killer Combo Pack (\$369) with Widow head/Warlock body guitar, a blood-red practice amp, and accessories. **Beard Guitars:** Prototype of a Lightning Rod rear-loaded resonator guitar was a real showstopper. **Boss:** Two more Twin Pedals—the WP-20G Wave



Line 6 Vetta

Processor and OC-20G Poly (meaning *polyphonic*) Octave—and the GT-6 floor processor with COSM amp models. **Cort:** The MGM-1 (\$750) updates the Matt "Guitar" Murphy signature guitar with a transparent blue, quilted maple top, a set neck joint, and Mighty Mite Blues humbuckers with coil taps. **Crate:** Limited Edition NAMM Centennial VC508 amp (\$379). **Dunlop:** Auto Q (\$185) über-envelope filter. **Electro-Voice:** Eliminator i series P.A. system

includes an amp, full-range speakers, and a subwoofer. **Epiphone:** The radical new designs of the e-series (including the Slasher and Poly Mod) were balanced by classic looks such as trippy pearl-finished Les Pauls. **ESP:** Added a line of left-handed guitars. **Fender:** Tweaker surprise at the booth—the Custom Shop's Mark Kendrick disassembled Clarence White's and Buck Owens' Teles to reveal the innards. Also unveiled was the Pro-Tube Series—channel switching combos (Concert Reverb, Twin Reverb, Pro Reverb) with classic blackface looks. **Fernandes:** The Ravelle Deluxe (\$699) boasts exquisite classic/contemporary lines. **GHS Strings:** Three-packs of Laurence Juber's signature cryogenic phosphor-bronze strings include a Juber CD. **Gibson:** Stunning signature models—Andy Summers' 1960 ES-335 and Dickey Betts' "ultra-aged" 1957 goldtop Les Paul—and reissues of '56 Goldtop, '58 Standard, and '68 Custom Les Pauls.

Gibson Dickey Betts 1957 Goldtop



Gretsch: Striking Rancher 6012 acoustics (\$1,650) in purple, regal blue, sunburst, and two-tone green. **Ibanez:** AEG10FRS acoustic-electric (\$419) in transparent red sunburst, and RG420K solidbody (\$999) armed with Roland's GK-2 synth driver. **Jackson:** MG Series (\$649-\$849) offers exclusive EMG HZ pickups. **Mesa/Boogie:** Recycler Recording Preamplifier (\$999). **Schecter:** Mike Tempesta's Ultra-M (\$999) blends a Firebird-inspired body and a 2+4 headstock into one gorgeous guitar. **Tech 21:** The chrome-plated Killer Wail (\$175) is a three-mode wah pedal. The Tri-A.C. (\$225) is a three-channel, programmable stompbox offering Tweed, British, and Calif amp emulations. **Washburn:** The amazing NV100 acoustic-electric (\$1,699) offers a B-Band saddle mic/preamp, the Buzz Feiten Tuning System, and user-adjustable neck pitch. **Yamaha:** The crafty AG Stomp acoustic preamp (\$699) includes eight mic models, a piezo/mic blend knob, and automatic feedback reduction. —MICHAEL MOLENDA



Korg Valvetronix



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TECHNOLOGY AND CRAFT IN PICTURESQUE LA PATRIE

By Michael Molenda

The rural village of La Patrie, Quebec, is so idyllic that the thought of a factory within its borders almost seems sacrilegious. But in this town of 475 inhabitants, half the population are guitarmakers, and within the walls of the Godin guitar plant, old-world craftsmanship and technology collaborate to produce acoustics and electrics that sound great and deliver excellent value.

Established in 1982 by Robert Godin, the company's Seagull acoustics incorporated features such as solid tops and lacquer finishes—elements of fine, handmade guitars—into "gigging" instruments that anyone can afford.

"When Robert started showing up in music stores with the first Seagulls, they were the plainest things anyone had seen," says Brian McConnell, Godin's V.P. for Sales and Mar-

keting. "But the point was to make an acoustic that played and sounded like an expensive model—even if it didn't look as pretty."

The commitment to value is still paramount, even though Godin now manufactures



After being dipped in boiling water, the guitar sides are formed in a heat press. Here, the mold for a Seagull is about to descend and bake the wood into the model's shape. A completely different mold is required for every size and shape manufactured by Godin.



After the sides are assembled, kerfing must be applied around the edges to provide a surface for gluing the guitar's top and bottom. In this photo, the kerfing is being glued and clamped in place by a Godin craftsman.

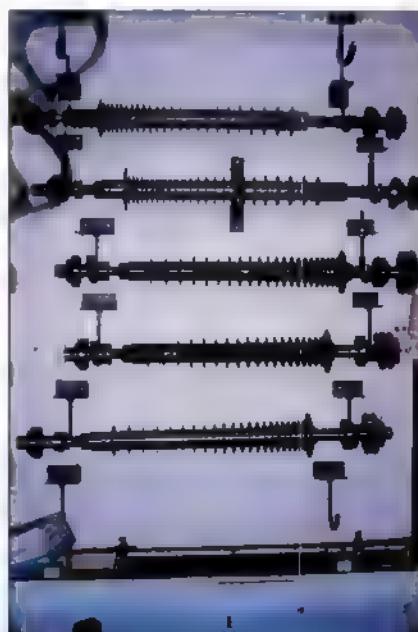


Because no clamp can hold all of a top's braces together with equal pressure, a vacuum press is used to strengthen the bond between wood and glue. After the bracing is glued to the top, a sheet of surgical rubber is placed over the assembly and the air is sucked out. The result is even pressure across all the braces. The top stays in the press for about 30 minutes, after which time the braces are secure enough for the top to be placed on a shelf to finish drying.



a full line of acoustics and electrics, and ships thousands of guitars throughout the world each week. It's a big company with four factories in Quebec and one in New Hampshire—as well as an office in Montreal—but as Godin walks through the La Patrie facility, it's clear he knows most of the workers, and can operate every machine himself. His boundless enthusiasm for guitarcraft is evident as he beams proudly while showing off a beautiful prototype of a jazz guitar. (He also has a mischievous side. To demonstrate Godin's new line of foam-based cases, he'd grab an expensive guitar off a store's rack, plop it in the case, and heave the sucker out into the street!)

With its production system well honed to integrate quality materials and construction, the company's manufacturing



A collection of gang saws awaits the call to cut fret positions into necks. A different saw is needed for every neck scale that Godin offers.

refinements for acoustics have been targeted at producing consistent-sounding instruments.

"Neck pitch affects tone, so the angle is critical for consistent sound," says McConnell. "When the neck tilts forward, you get more low end and less treble—the opposite effect is produced when the neck tilts back. If you don't



As the back of an acoustic guitar has a radius, it won't lay flush against a flat kerfing to allow a solid bond between wood and glue. This machine cuts a bevel into the kerfing to ensure an optimum gluing surface for the back.



take care, you can make an instrument that sounds muddy or too tinny. Our neck-matching machine



The final shaping of the neck heel before the neck is sent to the neck-matching machine to pair up with a body. Although the craftsman follows metal guides, the heel shaping is essentially done by hand and confirmed by eye.

(see photos)—which is in the fifth generation of technology—ensures that the neck pitch is angled towards the tonal sweet spot, and that the sweet spot is reproduced on every



Godin's unique neck-matching machine measures each guitar body to determine the exact curvature of the top. Then the machine applies those measurements as it sends the neck heel to ensure a perfectly matched attachment angle that is specific to that neck and body. As neck pitch affects tone, this machine identifies the tonal sweet spot desired by Godin and accurately reproduces that sweet spot for all models.

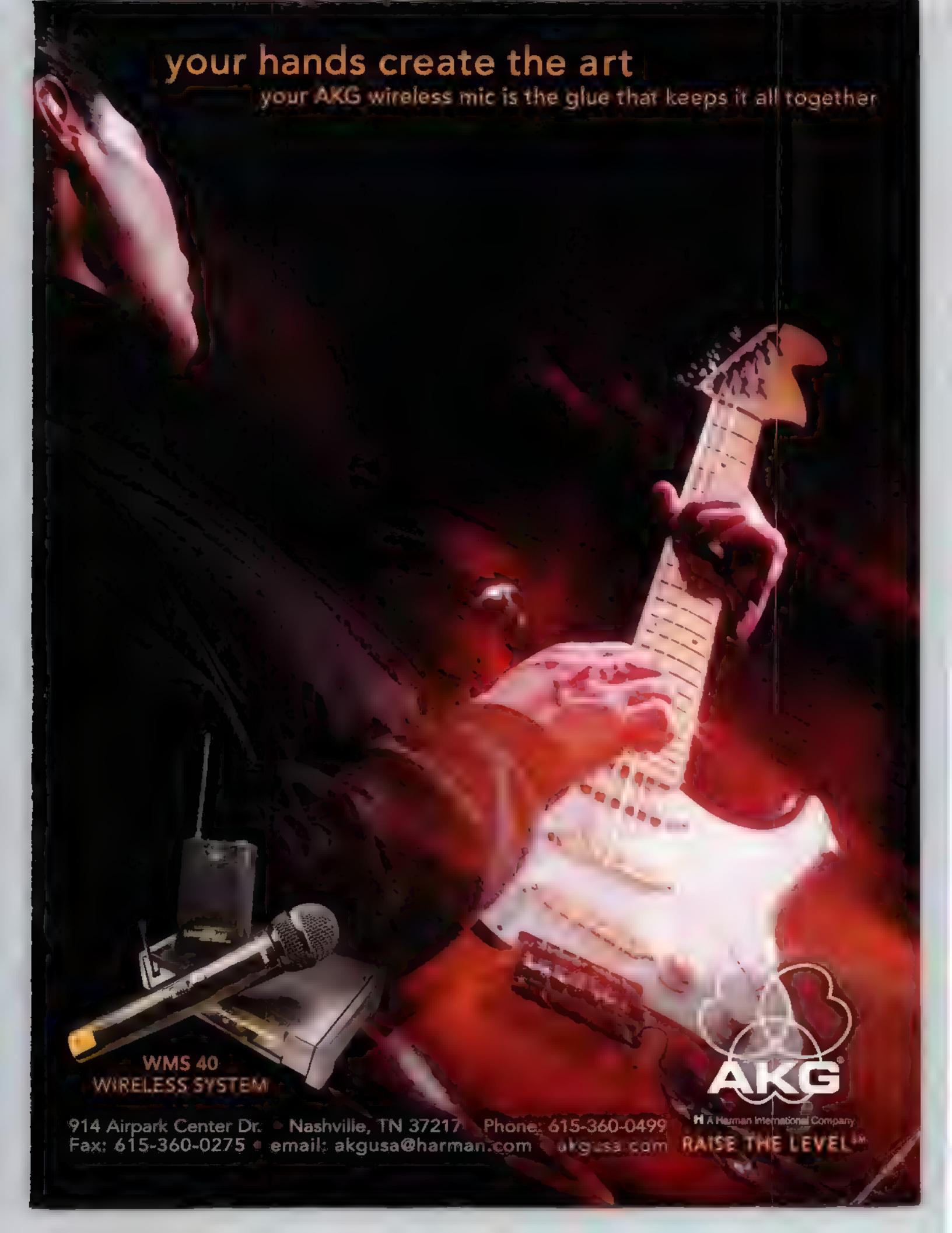
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guitar. So you can go into a store, pick up a bunch of Seagulls, and hear a consistent, balanced tone on every model you play."

The company identifies solid tops and lacquer finishes as the two major factors that distinguish its acoustics. "A laminated top only moves up and down," ex-

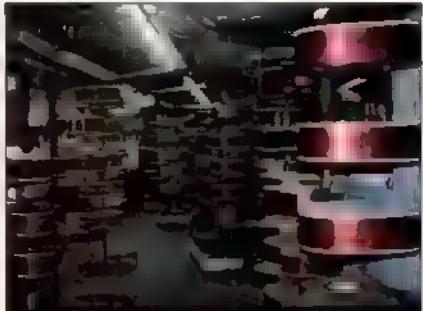


plains McConnell, "so you don't get a wide dynamic range, and it won't age—the way it sounds when you buy it, is pretty much how it will always sound. A solid

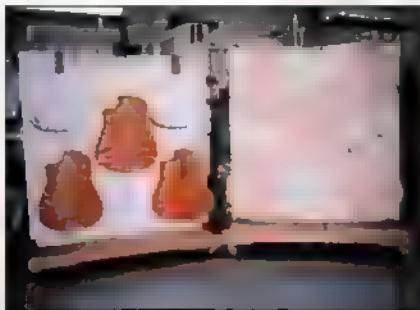
top, however, vibrates in a complex series of patterns across its surface, depending on the pitches being played. You get more dynamic range, richer harmonic content, and better note separation within chords. And the sound of a solid top gets better the more you play the guitar. In addition,

we don't put a polyester finish on our acoustics because it's thicker than lacquer and muffles the sound.

"But with all the attention to manufacturing, we're still entirely motivated by music. Our biggest thrill is hearing more people playing music on our instruments."



Here is an armada of guitar bodies hanging out to dry after being sprayed with lacquer. Each body is repeatedly sprayed, dried, and sanded until the finish is perfect. A semi-gloss finish typically requires four days from first coat to completion; a full-gloss job takes eight days.



In Godin's high-end shop, unfinished and stained flame-maple backs illustrate the carefully rendered cosmetics of Seagull's Artist Series acoustics.



Okay, this eight-blade cutting machine has nothing to do with acoustics, but it's still pretty darn cool. To craft the bodies of Godin's solidbody line, all the operator has to do is program the machine and drop a block of wood on the slab. The machine automatically cuts out the body's shape and all of its control cavities. Even with having to flip the wood over manually to complete the top and bottom, the entire process takes just a few minutes.

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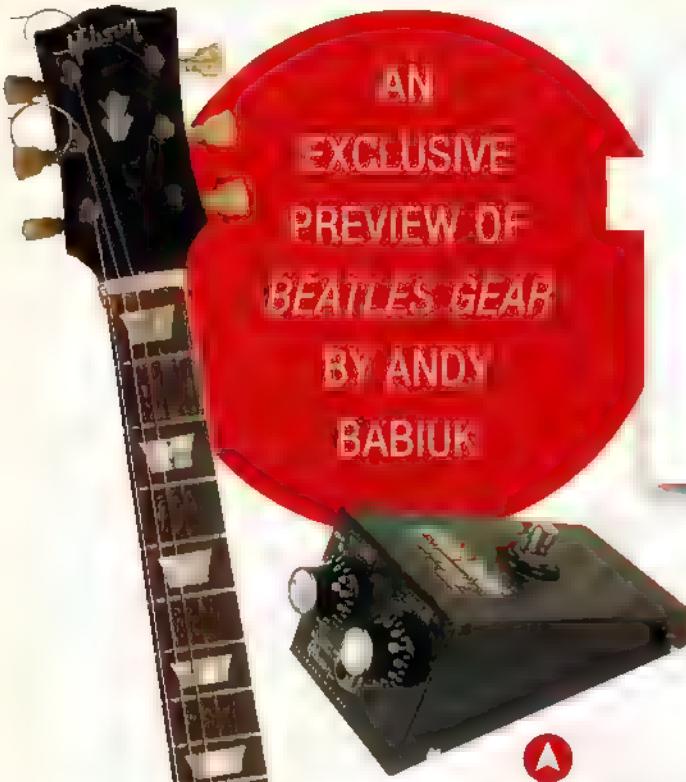
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AN EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW OF BEATLES GEAR BY ANDY BABIU

Although the engineers at Abbey Road studios built custom fuzz boxes in the early to mid '60s, John Lennon occasionally plugged his Rickenbacker 325 into a Gibson-made Maestro Fuzz-Tone.



The musical and cultural impact of the Beatles has been covered so exhaustively—most recently by the Fabs themselves in the video and print versions of the *Beatles Anthology*—that an entire library would collapse under the weight of its volumes. But throughout all the copious data on compositional genius and studio wizardry, the gear that gave voice to the songs that changed the world is often given scant notice. Until now.

Andy Babiuk's *Beatles Gear* traces the instrumental histories of George Harrison, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and Ringo Starr. From the Elpico and Watkins Westminster amps that powered the Hamburg club days, to the Beatlemania icons of Rickenbacker and Gretsch guitars, Vox amps, and Hofner basses, to the tools of *Sgt. Pepper* and beyond, *Beatles Gear* debunks myths and clarifies sonic advancements.

Lennon stripped the psychedelic paint off his Gibson J-160E just before the White Album sessions in 1968. The "Bed-In" caricatures were added during his 1969 peace demonstrations with wife Yoko Ono.



Noodling around during a break from filming *A Hard Day's Night*, Paul McCartney thumps his Hofner bass, George Harrison picks his Rickenbacker 12-string, Ringo waits for a cue, and Lennon strums his sunburst Gibson J-160E.

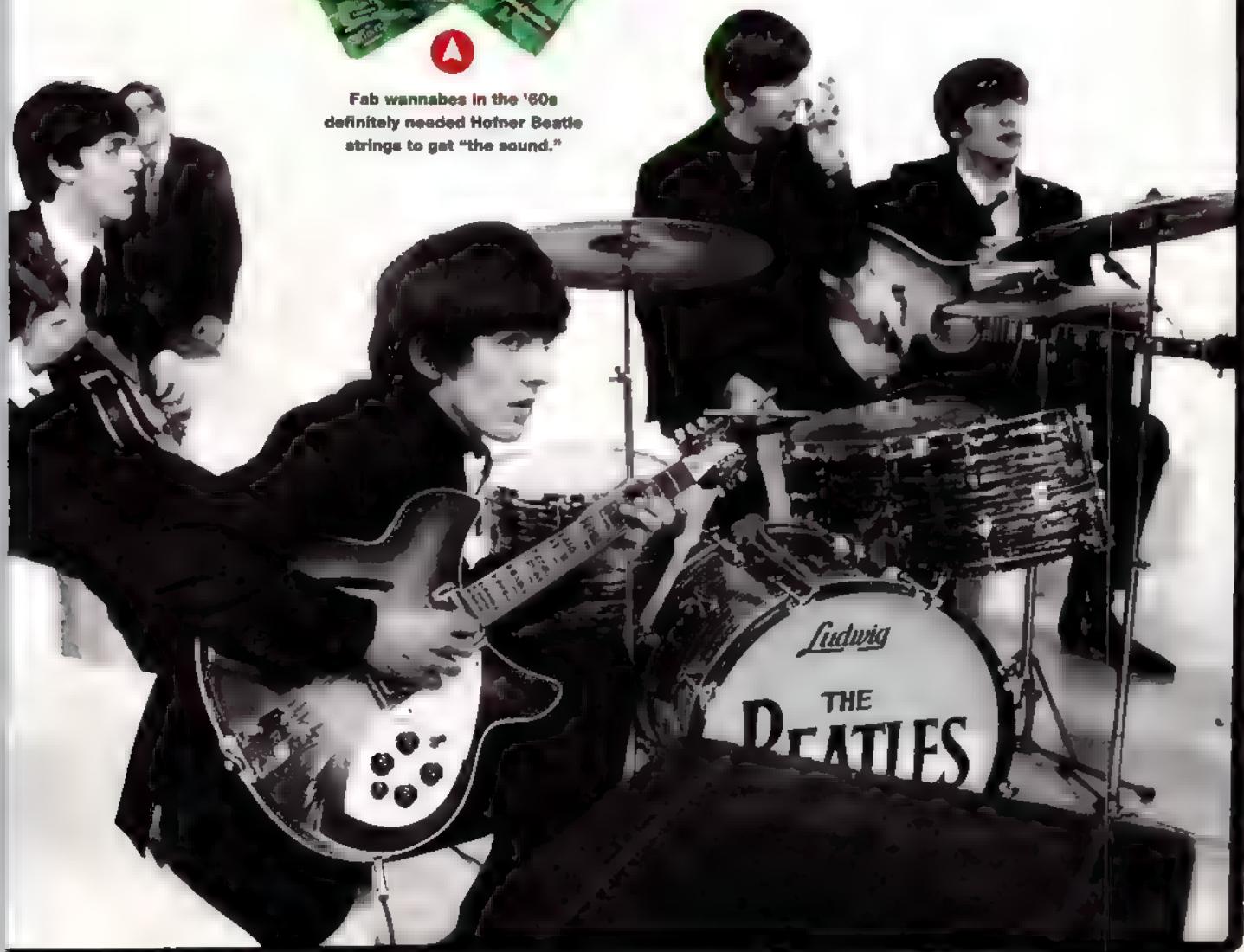
George Harrison's "All You Need Is Love"-era Strat was originally pale blue.



tones



Fab wannabes in the '60s definitely needed Hofner Beatles strings to get "the sound."



fab tones

Twenty-six of the group's original instruments are shown in detail, as well as 43 exact duplicates of gear lost along the band's journey into legend. *Guitar Player* is jazzed to offer these exclusive, "first look" tidbits from a book that should wow any musician obsessed with the Beatles.

Beatles Gear will be available November 2001 from Backbeat Books. To order, call 866-412-6857 or check out backbeatbooks.com

— MICHAEL MOLENDA

The White Album Strip tease

Back in the studio for *The Beatles* (popularly known as the *White Album*) sessions was John Lennon's newly transformed Gibson J-160E. Around this time, he had the psychedelic paint job

stripped off to reveal the instrument's plain wooden body. He thought the guitar would sound better as a result. Donovan remembers telling the Beatles while in India that a guitar would sound better without a heavy finish on it.

Along with the Gibson J-160E, Lennon and George Harrison sanded down their Epiphone Casinos. Harrison said that once they'd removed the finish they became much better guitars, explaining, "I think that works on a lot of guitars. If you take the paint and varnish off, and get the bare wood, it seems to sort of breathe."

A recent examination of Lennon's Gibson J-160E and Epiphone Casino shows that the guitars were professionally sanded down to the wood, and finished with a very thin, dull, unpolished protective coat of varnish. Closer examination of the inside soundhole of the J-160E reveals



Originally a gold top,

Harrison's '57 Les Paul Standard was previously owned by Rick Derringer, who had it refinished clear red. The Paul was later bought by Eric Clapton, who gave it to Harrison.

Clapton recorded the solo to "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" on this guitar.

Harrison's pre- "naturalized" Epiphone Casino. "If you take the paint and varnish off, the guitar breathes more," he said.

remnants of the blue paint applied during the guitar's psychedelic period.

When the J-160E underwent



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF BEATLES GEAR/BACKBEAT BOOKS



its refinishing to bare wood, the guitar's pickup was moved back to its original neck position (where it still exists today). At the same time, a new pickguard was put on the guitar. Photographs taken during the *White Album* sessions show that after Lennon's Casino was refinished to natural wood, the original pickguard-mounting hardware was put back on the guitar—but without the pickguard. This served no function and indicates that the refinishing job may not have been done at a music store or instrument repair shop.

McCartney would join the nat-

ural-wood club with his Rickenbacker 4001S at the beginning of the next year. A magazine report of the time adds weight to the idea that the sanding down of the psychedelic paint jobs was done by someone outside the musical instrument business.

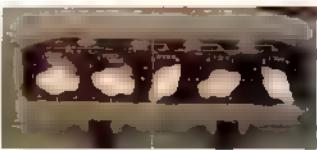
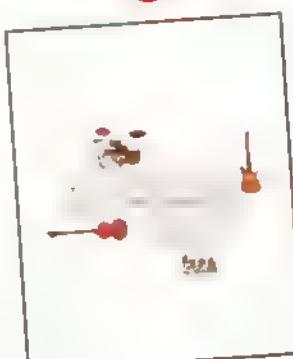
"Here's a sure sign that the psychedelic *Sgt. Pepper* era has well and truly ended," trumpeted the piece. "Paul recently took his Rickenbacker bass to an elderly craftsman in a Soho backstreet to have a two-year-old coat of psychedelic paint removed. McCartney chatted to the old man throughout the hour it took to

Lennon, Harrison (with '63 Gretsch Country Gentleman), and McCartney chat with TV producer A.N. Other before a 1963 performance on *Thank Your Lucky Stars*.

strip off the bright colors and smooth the guitar's woodwork to a plain, unpainted finish."

Excerpted from the forthcoming *Beatles Gear* (Backbeat Books) by Andy Babuik.

During the greased-hair and leather-jacket days in Hamburg, the boys rocked through (top to bottom) Watkins Westminster, Selmer Truvoice, and Elpice amps.



Smoking stacks and a '64 Strat

Doyle Bramhall II Finds the Perfect Tone and Blazes with a New Band

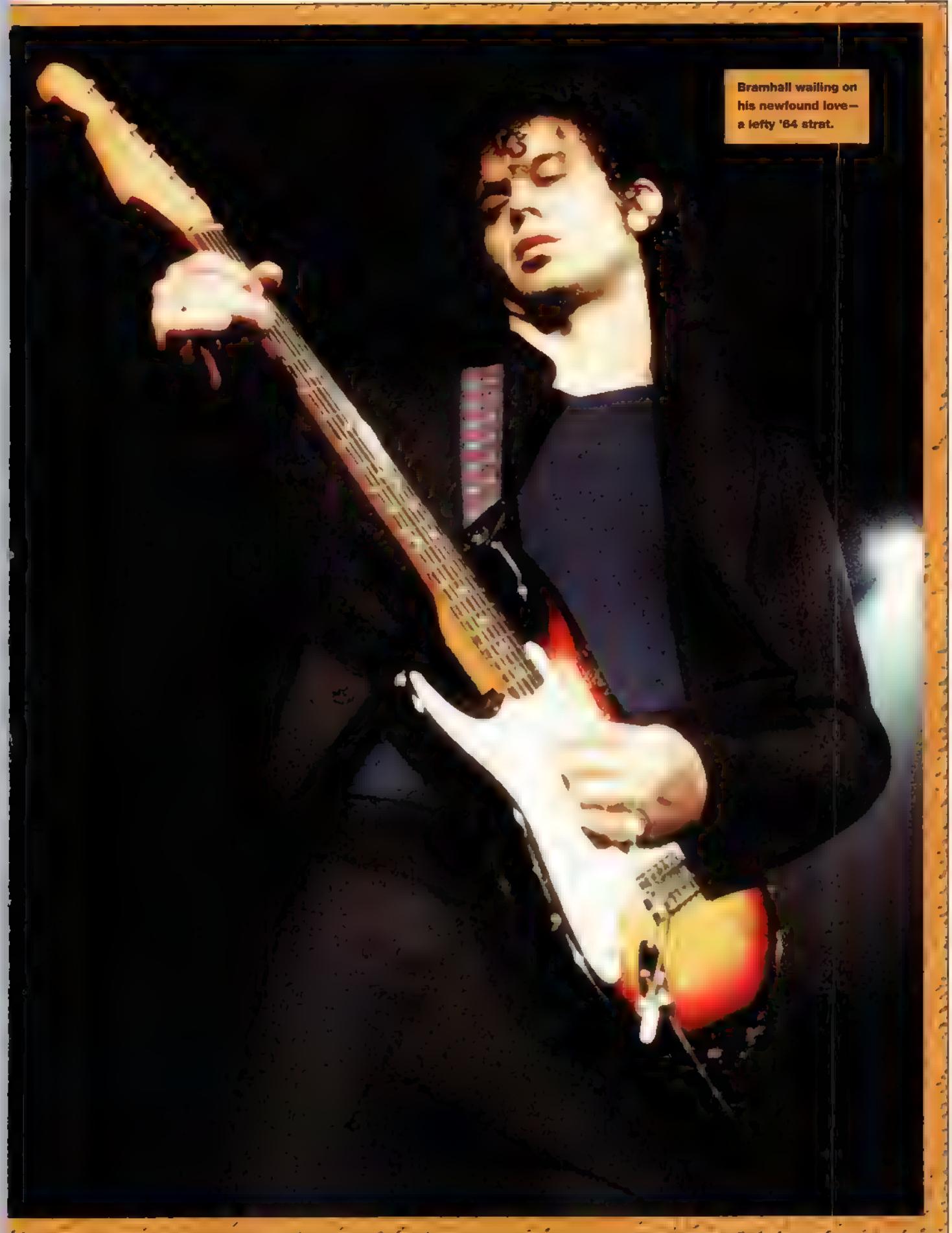


hances are, if you recognize the name Doyle Bramhall II, it instantly recalls the 32-year-old guitarist's brushes with musical greats. At age four, Bramhall and his family shared a house with Stevie Ray Vaughan in Austin, Texas. His father, Doyle Bramhall, Sr., played drums in Vaughan's band,

co-wrote many of his hits, and was one of his biggest vocal influences. The younger Doyle spent countless hours listening to his dad, Stevie, and Jimmie Vaughan jamming, which eventually led to him joining the Fabulous Thunderbirds in 1989.

A couple of years later, he teamed ▶ ▶ ▶

By Shain Hammond



Bramhall wailing on his newfound love—a lefty '64 strat.

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Smoking Stacks and a '64 Strat

with Austin guitarist Charlie Sexton in the blues-rock band Arc Angels, and then embarked on a solo career that produced 1996's *Doyle Bramhall II* and 1999's *Jellycream*.

More recently, Bramhall was handpicked to play and sing David Gilmour's parts on tour with former Pink Floyd-frontman, Roger Waters. If that's not enough, B.B. King and Eric Clapton covered two of his tunes on last year's *Riding with the King*.

Then Clapton tapped Bramhall's 6-string and songwriting talents for his latest album, *Reptile*,

and invited him to fill the opening slot on the subsequent tour. An impressive resume, to be sure. But what about Bramhall's *own* music? Many people predicted that Bramhall would step into Stevie Ray Vaughan's shoes and become the next Texas blues king. But Bramhall had no such desire. Staying true to his own vision, he melded his gritty guitar chops with a refreshing soulfulness to create a sound all his own. For his latest album, *Welcome* [RCA], Bramhall continues in an R&B-flecked vein similar to his previous efforts. However, rejuvenated by a butt-kicking new band—Smokestack—and his recent discovery of "the perfect tone," Bramhall has achieved his most compelling musical statement to date.

Did working with Roger Waters, B.B. King, and Eric Clapton pave the way for *Welcome*?

Absolutely. When I was writing for Eric, I liked a lot of the songs so much that I wanted

to keep them for myself! Roger is an amazing songwriter—he's one of the great lyricists of our time—and his arrangements are so great. He would talk to me about my songs, and what he thought my strengths were. The combination of those two experiences really gave me confidence—because both players are fans of mine—and I came into the most prolific songwriting period of my life during this record.

How did Clapton and Waters affect your songwriting?

Just being around them rubbed off. "Life" was definitely influenced by Roger. In fact, I wrote it while I was touring with him. I wasn't trying to cop his thing, but when you're playing such great songs as "Time," "Money," "Breathe," "Comfortably Numb," and "Shine on You Crazy Diamond," it's going to rub off—especially if you're playing them with the man who wrote them. But, overall, those gigs just gave me more self-assurance.

Doyle's Foil

Bramhall's songwriting partner, Craig Ross, played rhythm guitar on all but two songs on *Welcome*. Perhaps most visible as Lenny Kravitz's guitarist for the past ten years, Ross has also played with the Black Crowes and Natalie Merchant.

How did you get involved with Bramhall?

A friend of mine introduced me to Doyle before he recorded *Jellycream*. We wrote "Chasing the Sun" together, which ended up on *Jellycream*. Then we wrote "Marry You," which was on *Jellycream* and also on B.B. King and Eric Clapton's *Riding with the King*.

That's quite an honor.

Yeah, it killed me—B.B. and Clapton are my heroes.

How would you describe your role on *Welcome*?

My role was to support whatever Doyle was doing. I just listened to everyone else, and tried to play what fit. Because the album was recorded live, I tried to create as much of a bed as I could for him to play over.

What gear did you rely on?

Well, because it happened at the last minute, I only had one guitar with me—a '55 Strat. After the first day, I felt inspired to get a Gibson SG, so I went out and bought a '69.

Which songs did you use the SG on? "Last Night," "So You Want It to Rain," and "Life."

What other gear did you use?

I used a 1963 top-boost Vox AC30 and a silverface Fender Bassman. I also borrowed [bassist] Chris Bruce's pedalboard, which had a Fulltone Full Drive, a Line 6 Delay Modeler, a Boss compressor, and a Dunlop Rotovibe.

How about strings and picks?

I use D'Addario .010s and Fender heavy picks.

What was the most memorable thing about the *Welcome* sessions?

The most amazing thing was just recording completely live with a bunch of people in one room. Doyle would sing the vocal, and play the lead in the same take—which is really brave. It was one of the best recording experiences I've had in a really long time. When you do session work, a lot of times the finished product sounds completely different than what was going on when you were there. This one sounds exactly like it did in the headphones when we were recording.

What is the biggest lesson you've learned as a sideman?

I've learned that you should just play what you feel like playing and not worry about it. They wouldn't have hired you if they didn't want you to do your thing.



Smoking Stacks and a '64 Strat

*What prompted you to get more guitar-intensive with Welcome, as opposed to *Jellycream*?*

It just sort of evolved that way. We recorded "Cry" first, and the guitar just took off. It was like I got my focus—not only as a songwriter and a singer, but also as a guitar player—and I was having fun again for the first time in ages.

*How did recording *Welcome* differ from your previous albums?*

Well, I'd been studying the sound of records that I love—the first two Zeppelin records, Hendrix, the Beatles, the Stones, Bob Marley, and the Chess recordings of Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, and Little Walter—wondering what gave them that sound. I found out those records all have one thing in common—they were recorded with everyone playing live in the same room with no baffles. For example, I was listening to some outtakes of a Hendrix version of "Red House," and every time the guitar got quiet, I could hear the snare rattling. So a lot of music



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Smoking Stacks and a '64 Strat

was leaking into the drum and vocal mics—and that produces a real unique sound you don't hear much anymore. In order to record live like that, though, you've got to be tight. So we rehearsed for seven weeks beforehand. And even though a lot of the old records that were done that way had overdubbed vocals, we ended up recording everything live because it sounded so fresh and heavy.

Did you improvise your solos?

Yes. There were some solos, like "Send Some Love," where I already had a melody in mind. But others, such as the outro solo on "Thin Dream," were improvised. A lot of times, a solo has to play out a specific melody because it's really important for that song. But it just depends if the song calls for it. For the most part, I just come up with the stuff when I pick up the guitar. Even with the things that I stick to, I don't think I ever play them the same way twice.

How did you get the great acoustic tones on the intro to "Thin Dream"?

I went through about 12 acoustics, but nothing sounded right to me. I had been trying a lot of old Martins that had high actions and weren't intonated very well. I ended up using a Takamine that was extremely easy to play. Then I took another acoustic and tuned it to Nashville tuning—with the four low strings an octave above standard tuning—which gives it sort of a 12-string- or mandolin-kind of sound. I played the parts similarly, but not exactly the same, then they were panned hard left and hard right.

That song is nearly nine minutes long and features an extended jam that's a bit of a departure for you.

Because we had rehearsed so much, we had a structure down. But during the first take, it just took off, and we let it carry us. We didn't worry about anything except "this is fun."

What did rhythm guitarist Craig Ross bring to the table?

He has been my writing partner for the last three or four years. And when the band was rehearsing, we were looking for another guitar player who could come in and complement my style while sounding completely different. He ended up playing on every song except "Cry" and "Smokestack." Craig is so great because he listens and adds to everything I play. Like on "Thin Dream," every lick I play he complements by playing something a little different. Then I play off of that. It's really inspiring. We're not greedy in our playing, either—I want him to

play, and I won't step on his toes when he's playing. He's the same with me.

Did you end up doing any overdubs on the album?

The two acoustic parts on "Thin Dream" were overdubs, because I was playing the main part on electric. I had an epic, Zeppelin-like tune in mind. I wanted it to start out acoustically, and then build into this hard song. There were a few more here and there, but my lead vocals weren't overdubbed, and neither were my solos, except the ones on "Rain" and "Soul Shaker."

How about guitar gear?

I've been searching for the perfect tone for years, and I heard that a shop called Norm's Guitars [in Reseda, California] had the only left-

handed '60s Strat in the L.A. area. So I went there, and it was a beautiful '64 sunburst Strat—almost like Buddy Holly's guitar—with a finish that turns from fiery red and orange right to brown. Then I picked it up, and it was the lightest Strat I've ever felt. The wood must have been really dry before it was painted. Anyway, they also had a 100-watt Marshall 1967 Super Bass head. I plugged the Strat into the Marshall, and it was like, "Wow! That's the sound I've been looking for for years." I bought both of them immediately. It was outrageous how much it cost, but I had to have them. I took them down to the studio to record "Cry," and I thought, "This is it!" I ended up recording the whole record with that guitar and amp.

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Smoking Stacks and a '64 Strat

Which cabinets did you use?

I used a couple of Marshall 4x12s with Celestion Vintage 30s.

What did you use to mic your amps?

I used a Shure SM57, but the reason the guitar sounds so huge is because of my vocal mic. I was directly in front of my amp, and there was a very small baffle in front of it, but the top two speakers were above the baffle, and they were pointed right at my vocal mic. The drums and everything else were coming through my vocal mic. Every time we took it out of the mix, it went back to that normal, dry studio sound. The vocal mic is where all the ambience came from.

How about effects?

I used a Univibe, an Octavia, an Ibanez Tube Screamer, a Vox King Wah, a Fulltone Clyde wah, a Line 6 Delay Modeler, a Hughes & Kettner Tube Rotosphere, and a Fuzz Face—which is my favorite pedal.

What kind of strings and picks do you use?

D Addario, .011-.054. If I tune down a half step, I use .012s. Sometimes I tune down to C# and use .014-.068 sets. I also use D'Addario heavy picks.

What's your favorite tone on the record?

My solo tone on "Blame" is great, and I felt like I expressed myself really well on that song. I used the Strat, the Marshall, and the Univibe. I also love the tone on the "Thin Dream" solo, which I got with the Fuzz Face.

What's the most important thing guitarists should learn about songwriting?

I don't know if there's anything you can learn. You can perfect what comes naturally to you, but I don't know if you can learn to write good songs or songs with substance. The key is to be emotionally connected to your songs and to convey a message—even if it's not the most lyrically poetic or heady message. If your heart isn't connected to the song, it's not worth doing.

Have you noticed a common pitfall among guitarists that keeps them from that?

I think musicians, in general, are so worried about making a song that's three minutes and 30 seconds long and hitting the audience over the head with a chorus first. There are so many overnight successes right now that everybody wants a hit—a quick fix. There's definitely a flavor-of-the-month thing going on. Clapton gave me some advice. He said to just follow your heart, and if it's good, people are going to come onboard and follow your lead. But you're the only one who has your vision,

so don't second-guess it.

What do you think of the current guitar scene?

I don't really listen to guitar players anymore. I don't like a lot of contemporary music, because I don't think it draws from a very deep well. If your only influence is Led Zeppelin, and you don't know who influenced Led Zeppelin, there's not going to be much depth to what you do. If you want to create great music, you have to either shut out everything and create something new, or you have take bits from all kinds of music—world, jazz, blues, classical, anything. All the great bands did that. The Stones took from classical, blues, country, and traditional music. But now, music is so compartmentalized. It's less musical, and more percus-

sive and angry. I don't think players are really listening to each other, because they're all just pissed off and playing it out.

Who are some of your influences?

I grew up listening to Freddie King, Lightnin' Hopkins, Little Son Jackson, Mance Lipscomb—a lot of the local Texas blues artists. Here's one that will get you—I thought John Lennon was a great guitar player. Not many people look at him as a guitar player, but I found him to be really inventive. From a vocal standpoint, I was into Stevie Wonder, Al Green, and Sly Stone. My favorite of all time is Donny Hathaway. When I got into songwriting, I took from all areas—blues, soul, gospel, R&B. I also borrowed from Jeff Beck and the Beatles.

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The advertisement features a black and white photograph of an Epiphone EL-00 acoustic guitar. The guitar has a solid spruce top, a mahogany body, and a rosewood fingerboard. It is shown from a three-quarter perspective, highlighting its construction and finish. In the background, there is a blurred image of a person's face, possibly a guitar player, and the Epiphone logo is visible in the lower left corner of the advertisement area.

Smoking Stacks and a '64 Strat

Having played with SRV, what would you say is the biggest thing that guitarists are overlooking in his playing?

Stevie was one of the greatest players ever, and nobody is ever going to fill that void, so you might as well just get over it and make your own music. There are a lot of cheap imitations

out there, and I think they're all missing one thing—his soul. Stevie was *funky*. But people are only picking up on the barroom blues and rock licks. They're just interested in hot-rodding. Stevie was a hot-rodder, but he was also a connoisseur of music and a music historian. All these people copying him only know *his* style, and they take themselves more seriously than he did.

What were the biggest things you learned from the sessions with B.B. King and Eric Clapton?

They inspired me to record *Welcome* live, because that's how they did their album. It just felt so good to sit around playing and having fun—"Wow, what a concept. People actually

playing in a room together!"

What was the toughest part of the Roger Waters gig?

Having to leave the Ritz Carlton, get off the private jet, and get into a van to do my own tour [laughs].

What inspires you to keep playing guitar year after year?

I'm not the kind of guitar player Stevie was. From the time he was seven until he was 25, he played guitar 12 hours a day. He wanted to be the best, and he became the best. I don't have that kind of patience. What gets me off is being the best songwriter I can be. If I sing, I want my guitar playing to sound like an extension of my voice, or vice versa. My goal is to be a complete artist, not just a guitar player.

Where do you see your playing going in the future?

I don't know. I'm just letting it take me. If I let it happen naturally, it just comes to me—especially when a challenge is put in front of me, such as being in a room with Eric Clapton and B.B. King, having Eric say, "Okay, you take a solo," and not flubbing it [laughs]. It was a little nerve-wracking to do that in front of two of the greatest living guitarists. The fact that I could do it and not be embarrassed by what I played—and not overplay or show off—was a great experience.

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EVER PLAYED THROUGH A ROTARY SPEAKER simulator—or even a mechanical device such as a Fender Vibratone, Motion Sound, or Leslie cabinet—and wondered why your riffs and grooves don't sound more like an organ? There's nothing wrong with warbling guitar tones, but if you want to emulate a mighty B-3, you have to *think* like someone who plays one. Truth be told, the notes you choose have a lot more to do with nailing the organ sound than any piece of gear. ■ In this lesson, we'll identify techniques to help you achieve a righteous Hammond vibe. Used in conjunction with a rotary speaker (or simulator)—or even good ol' tremolo—these ideas will let you step outside the world of strummed strings and enter the world of clicky keys. Even without *any* effects, you'll sound more like an organist using these moves than if you were to play stock guitar phrases through a beautiful vintage Leslie. ■ For inspiration, we'll turn to late-'50s and '60s soul-jazz and borrow from the greats: the pioneering Jimmy Smith, Brother Jack McDuff, Big John Patton, Richard Groove Holmes, and Jimmy McGriff. We'll emphasize comping and focus on versatile voicings and fills you can use in blues, R&B, and funk. Good news: These moves and grooves aren't supremely difficult. In many ways, the challenge is more mental than physical. Duping organ is as much about what you leave *out* as it is what you *include* in your lines. ■



DUO SMITH

COMPING ON GUITAR / BY ANDY ELLIS

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BOSS TWO-FINGER VOICINGS

Guitarists routinely play huge voicings. Consider the *E*-grip barre chord: It occupies only three frets, but spans two octaves. Because organists typically comp with one hand while playing a fill or line with the other, they favor chords with much smaller ranges. Although some keyboard players can comfortably reach a tenth (an interval of an octave plus a third) with one hand, we'll restrict our voicings to a less super-human range of one octave.

In most cases, this forces us to comp on three adjacent strings. Check it out: Ex. 1 shows a I-IV-I progression that's built from tight, organ-approved grips on the fifth, fourth, and third strings. For convenience, we're in the key of *A*—not a beloved key of jazz organists, who typically gravitate to *C*, *F*, and *G*, as well as such “horn” keys as *B*, *E*, and *A*.

Notice how these chords are all rootless. Organists can easily finger four notes within a one-octave spread, but when we play jazzy extended and altered chords on only three strings, as in this example, we have to sacrifice the root in order to include the important color tones. In band settings, the bass establishes the root, so you don't miss it. When you're practicing on your own, however, stripped-down jazzy voicings can sometimes sound ambiguous—even strange. If you're having trouble hearing a voicing in its musical context, preview its root before fretting the chord.

Let's zoom in on Ex. 1's chord tones to get

a feel for the “skimming the top” approach to harmony. From low to high, *A*9 contains *G*, *B*, and *E*, or the *b7*, 9, and 5. Shifting to the syncopated *A*13, we play *G*, *C*, and *F*, or *b7*, 3, and 13. Bar 1's final chord, *A*7#5, contains *G*, *C*, and *E* (notated enharmonically as *F*) or *b7*, 3, and #5. In bar 2, *D*9 offers *F*, *C*, and *E*, or the 3, *b7*, and 9. We drop the same grip down a fret to generate *D*b9.

This analysis reveals something important: These voicings all include the *b7*—which is necessary to establish the dominant-chord flavor—as well as an essential color tone, in this case, either the 9, 13, or #5. For the third tone, we simply round out the sound with a 3 or 5, depending on what's immediately available within our three-string universe.

Notice how fretting each voicing requires only two fingers—sweet! Also dig how the chords change using half- or whole-steps. Though guitarists often swoop up and down the neck to change chords, keyboardists rely on tightly controlled, stepwise moves to work through a progression. To emulate organ, we have to adopt this voice-leading mindset.

Ex. 2 shows a V-IV-I cadence in the key of *A*. We're still using rootless chords on the fifth, fourth, and third strings. Our prickly *E*7#9(*G*, *D*, and *F*double-sharp) is composed of the 3, *b7*, and #9. The following *E*9 voicing is an old friend (we played it in Ex. 1 as *D*9 and *D*b9), but bar 2's *D*11 is new: *G*, *C*, and *F*translate to 11, *b7* and 3. We analyzed the last two chords—*D*9 and *A*9—in the previous progression.

With these two examples, you now have the means to comp an organ-approved 12-bar blues in the key of *A*. And guess what? If you can comp in *one* key, you can comp in all 12. It's well worth

ORGANIC SECRETS AND TIMBRAL TIPS

AS DETAILED IN THE LESSON, THE SINGLE most important faux-organ principle is to keep chord voicings within a one-octave range. Here are several other tips to bear in mind as you work through these examples.

- Unlike, say, cocktail piano with its lush, rippling arpeggios, soul-jazz organ features funky chordal jabs. To recreate this effect, pluck the notes in each voicing simultaneously, using a hybrid (flatpick plus middle and ring fingers) or straight fingerstyle picking-hand technique. The chords need to spring out as chunky blocks of sound.

- Once you've attacked the strings, leave them alone—don't add finger vibrato and stay clear of your whammy bar. Most of us add vibrato unconsciously, so this means fighting an ingrained habit.

- An organ's keys aren't velocity sensitive, which means that, unlike a piano, they don't register dynamics. On a B-3, for example, notes are either on or off—they won't swell or fade without the help of a volume pedal. Because guitar strings are *extremely* dynamic, it helps to tame these level fluctuations with some light compression. Too much compression will take you into the realm of bowed strings—and you don't want that. Instead, just try to knock the spike off your attack and fatten up the immed ate decay.

- When playing organ-style riffs, avoid open strings. While the timbral differences between fretted and non-fretted notes can be gorgeous in other settings, in this case you want your notes to sound as uniform as possible.

- Approach slides carefully. Sometimes organists gliss from point to point, but when they do, you can hear each key they cross as a distinct pitch—it's the nature of the beast and its switches. You know those little *whups* and *zings* that make blues guitar sound so vocal? When you're playing organically, they're taboo. If you must slide, make it brief, restrict yourself to *one* string, and make sure you can hear all the notes as you glide along the fretboard.

—AE

Ex. 1

Freely (I) A9 A13 A7#5 (IV) D9 (b7) A9 (I)

Ex. 2

Freely (V) E7#9 E9 (IV) D11 D9 (I) A9 (I)



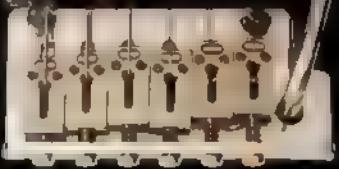
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the effort to memorize all six of these two-fingered voicings and learn where they lie in all your favorite keys.

GETTING PUNCHY

Inspired by Big John Patton's "Let 'Em Roll," Ex. 3 illustrates the kind of harmonic stabs that

form the backbone of many organ grooves. In bar 1, notice how the same grip yields two different chords—G9 and G6. The first voicing is rootless: *F, A, D* or *B, 9, 5*. The second is *G, B, E*, or *1, 3, 6*. Composed of perfect fourths, bar 2's G11 has an open, restless sound.

Find the top note in each of these four chords, and then play the tones as a line (*D, E, F, E*). This is the same figure (5, 6, 7) Chuck Berry uses to underpin his classic rock-and-roll guitar grooves, but in this case, it rides on top of the harmony. The parenthetical low notes in-

dicate a bass run played on organ pedals. To emulate their dark tone, palm mute the sixth string.

FILLING THE HOLES

Tasty chord-based fills are crucial to soul-jazz organ comping, and Ex. 4 illustrates an essential move. The first three chords in this phrase form a gospel-tinged I7-IV-I7 (*C7-F-C7*) shift. Keep those *b3-b3 (E-b-Eb)* and *6-b7 (A-Bb)* hammers crisp—organ keys are on/off switches—and play with a swing feel.

This soulful passage starts on the root, so it's easy to work it out in other keys. For example, begin with *F#* on the fourth string, play the riff a few times, and then repeat the process one fret higher in *G*. Keep climbing chromatically until you reach *F* at the 15th fret. To learn how to weave variations of this passage, listen to Jimmy Smith's "The Sermon."

OLD WINE, NEW BOTTLE

The bluesy moves in Ex. 5 occur in a region that feels unfamiliar to many guitarists. We're in the key of *G*. So where's the first place you'd land to pick a *G* blues—the third position, minor pentatonic box? Yeah, me too. But this certified Hammond lick lies in the fifth position. Here, two frets higher, everything looks different, but it's still *G* blues territory.

One advantage of this "über blues box" is that you can use your 1st and 2nd finger for the *b5* hammer and pull. This results in a strong, defined double-stop sound that's in keeping with our on/off switch concept. In bar 1, beats two and three, we suggest the IV by twice fretting *C-E* with a 1st-finger partial barre. Notice how playing in the fifth position makes it easier to jump to the seventh-position *G9*. Get comfortable with this region, as it plays a pivotal role in other faux-organ licks.

MORE CRAFTY DOUBLE-STOPS

Ex. 6 is inspired by Brother Jack McDuff's "Screamin'"—though all the greats play this lick, and it likely originated with Jimmy Smith. We first saw the I7-IV gambit in Ex. 4. But here, instead of returning to the I7, we press on to bar 1's tremoloed minor-third (*D-F*). Organists perform this as a trill, but rather than attempting

Ex. 3

$\text{♩} = 128-144$

Ex. 4

$\text{♩} = 84-100$

Ex. 5

$\text{♩} = 96-128$

Ex. 6

$\text{♩} = 80-116$



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to play lightning-fast hammers and pulls on one string, we'll finger these two notes as a harmonic interval and quickly strum them. Sustaining a smooth tremolo for three beats takes practice, so start at a relaxed tempo and slowly work up to speed.

Next time you're comping a slow 12-bar shuffle, substitute this lick for each chord in the progression. For instance, here, we're outlining *G7*. Move to the eighth position for *C7* and the tenth position for *D7*.

In Ex. 7, a lovely I-IV riff distilled from "Blues All Day Long" by Richard Grove Holmes, we start sketching *Bb7* above the *Bb* blues box, drop down into it, and finally emerge below it to catch *Eb9*, the IV chord. What's particularly significant is how bar 1's double-stops all stem from a 1st-

finger partial barre. No doubt you've played these notes many times before, but odds are *not* with this precise fingering. This is a case of sound dictating the moves: We want to slur each interval, yet keep them uniform. The best way to accomplish this is to turn our 1st and 2nd fingers into a mobile hammering and pulling machine that moves along the fretboard. We can even use these two digits to fret the final *Eb9*—cool.

A STEPWISE TURNAROUND

This groovy turnaround (Ex. 8) comes courtesy of McDuff by way of Grant Green's

"Blues in Maude's Flat." Pop this two-bar phrase into bars 11 and 12 of a blues in *G*, and you'll be smiling.

Like many fine turnarounds, this contains a stepwise line (*F, E, Eb, D, Db, C*) played against a static tone (*G*). It keeps your 4th finger dancing, so take it slowly at first. By now, you know all about the *G7-C-G7* flourish at the end, right?

PLAYING CHANGES

Jimmy McGriff's "I've Got a Woman" is a textbook example of soul-jazz organ moves, and Ex. 9 contains two of his cool melodic riffs. In

Ex. 7

$\text{A} = 104-116$

Bb7 (I) *Eb9* (IV)



Ex. 8

$\text{A} = 104-116$

G7



Ex. 9

$\text{A} = 100-126$

C9 (I) *F9* (IV)

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the middle of bars 1 and 3, notice how we hold a high note (C and F, respectively) while playing a descending run that ends with an interval of a minor tenth.

Like most organs used for jazz, the Hammond B-3 boasts two manuals (or keyboards). This allows several slick tricks, one of which is to hold a note with one hand while riffing above or below it with the other. In this example, we mimic the dual-manual sound by sustaining a note with the 4th finger while playing a descending run with the other three. It's subtle, but fat.

First practice the C9 and F9 phrases independently, then comp a 12-bar blues in C using these two moves. You've already got the first eight bars covered with the I and IV licks shown here. For the V-IV-I-V shift that occurs in the final four measures of a 12-bar blues, try this:

- To hit bar 9's G9, transplant the first measure of C9's phrase to the fifth position (anchor your 4th finger on G at the 8th fret).

- Then, for bar 10's F9, simply drop the same figure down two frets to the third position.

Finally, to fill bars 11 and 12, transpose Ex. 8's turnaround from G to C. This will put you in the eighth position—the C blues box—for the concluding fireworks.

BOOGALOO BACKBEATS

Most of our examples are notated with a swing feel for that smoky Blue Note sound. However, in the late '60s and early '70s, soul-jazz embraced boogaloo grooves played straight with a heavy backbeat. Ex. 10 gives you an idea of what to play in such settings.

Adapted from funky riffs in McGriff's "Fat Cakes," this four-bar passage features a wicked tritone (B \flat -E in bar 1). Guitarists tend to bend into this interval (T-Bone Walker and Chuck Berry showed us how), but on the organ, the best you can do is quickly skip from E \flat to E \natural . We can imitate this clicky sound by simply hammering from a fourth to a tritone.

That last line on the fifth and fourth strings (from the *and* of beat four, bar 3, through beat three, bar 4) is a funk-jazz mainstay. Use a variation of this sequence whenever a blues-derived riff sounds too raw. The difference? Here, the notes come from a C major pentatonic scale (C, D, E, G, A or 1, 2, 3, 5, 6), as opposed to a C minor pentatonic (C, E \flat , F, G, B \flat or 1, 3, 4, 5, 7). It all comes down to the sweetness of the 6 versus the tartness of the 7.

MORE TRITONE MAGIC

When you want to turn some heads, play Ex. 11's lines through a rotary speaker or simulator. To hear Jimmy Smith work these sounds, listen to "Blue Bash," which he recorded with Kenny Burrell. Wow!

The tritones make this figure special. First, we outline the I chord (C9) by hammering into B \flat -E, the b7 and 3. Then in bar 2, we establish the IV (F9) by hammering into A-E \flat , the 3 and b7. These moves are only a half-step apart, so the harmony has the closest possible voice leading. Notice how on the fourth string the b7 moves to the 3, and how on the third string the 3 shifts to the b7. Jazz and R&B horn players use this trick all the time.

If you're looking for the V chord's (G9) tritone on the fourth and third strings, just bump the I chord's tritone up a fret to B-F. Those hammers work here too. Yup—now you have another way to comp a medium tempo, 12-bar blues.

BLUES YOU CAN USE

We'll wrap up this faux-organ lesson with a V-IV-I double-stop workout in the key of A (Ex. 12). Notice how in each measure, we perform the same routine—initially on the first and second strings, and then the second and third strings. There are two ways to analyze what we're doing:



Ex. 10

$\text{♩} = 132-160$

C9

Ex. 11

$\text{♩} = 92-108$

C9
(I)

F9
(IV)

C9
(I)

F9
(IV)

Ex. 11

$\text{♩} = 92-108$

C9
(I)

F9
(IV)

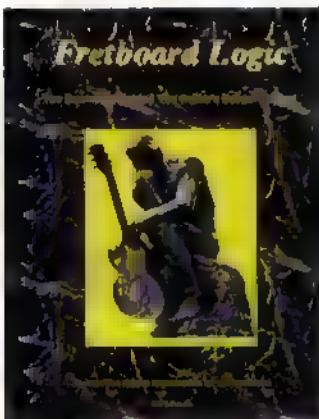
C9
(I)

F9
(IV)

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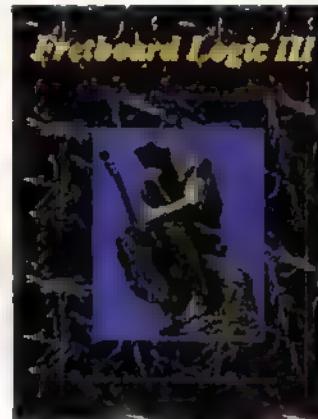
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• While we hold a high-chord root, we resolve the chord's $\flat 5$ up to the 5, or down to the 4.

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These four measures provide you with all the necessary double-stop mojo to comp an organic shuffle the next time you're performing onstage or at a jam session. Round out the fills with voicings from Examples 1 and 2, and you'll be set.

ONWARD

You can—and should—snap apart and recombine all the moves and phrases we've covered in these dozen examples. To comp well, you needn't know 100 different patterns, but rather how to transpose and reconfigure five cool maneuvers in 20 ways. Think of it as musical recycling. If you're crafty, you can create the illusion of having an endless supply of grooves.

To see how the masters play this game, search out *Blue Bash!* by Kenny Burrell and Jimmy Smith, Smith's *Back at the Chicken Shack* (which also includes Burrell), *The Honeydripper* by Jack McDuff (featuring Grant Green), and the excellent two-CD collection *The Blue Note Years, Organ and Soul*.



Ex. 12

$\text{A} = 88-120$

E9
(V)

D9
(IV)

A9
(I)

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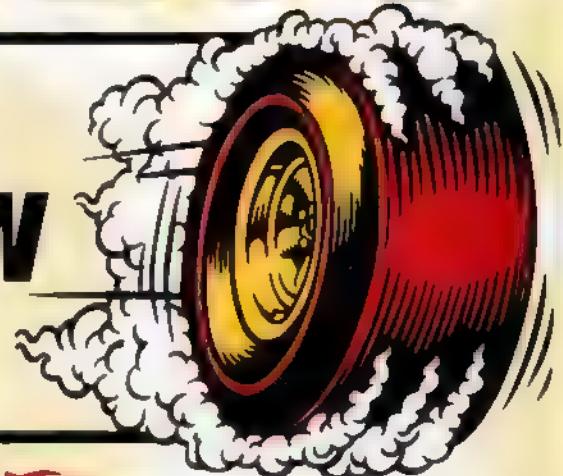
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STRAY CATS



GRITTS

**BRIAN SETZER'S
ROARING RETURN
TO ROCKABILLY**



BY ART THOMPSON

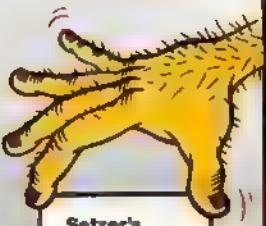


S

omething special occurs when Brian Setzer straps on his 1959 Gretsch 6120 and goes into action. Seeing him perform—either with the Stray Cats, the Brian Setzer Orchestra, or his new band, the '68 Comeback Special—is to witness a guitarist of incredible ability and death-defying flair. Setzer can burn up the fretboard with the fear-less abandon of a motocross racer, be-bop like a jazzier, and fingerpick like a Nashville hot-shot. He can also melt audiences with crooning sojourns into the Sinatra zone. And he plays darned good banjo, too! ■ Setzer was only 21 when



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN POPPLEWELL



Setzer's newest Hot Rod sports TV Jones Filter 'Tron pickups and custom pinstriping over a primer-black finish. The scene on his back took more than 40 hours to outline and still needs to be colored.

Stray Cat Struts

the Stray Cats turned the punk/new wave movement on its head with *Built for Speed*—a rowdy celebration of '50s-style rockabilly that sent the young trio to the top of the charts with hits such as "Rock this Town," "Rumble in Brighton," and "Stray Cat Strut." Setzer's savvy guitar playing probably caused many a punker to trade in studs and safety pins for tattoos and a pompadour. But more importantly, Setzer brought guitar playing back to center stage with his hybrid mix of country, rock, swing, jazz, and be-bop. He also inspired many guitarists to dig into the styles of '50s-era rockers such as Scotty Moore, Cliff Gallup, James Burton, Gene Vincent, and Eddie Cochran.

After the Stray Cats finally ran out of lives in '94, Setzer set his sights on another nearly forgotten style—*swing*. He cultivated his big-band concept while working on a couple of solo albums, and then broke out with a 17-piece band on 1994's *Brian Setzer Orchestra* and 1996's

Guitar Slinger. The big band was a ballsy venture for Setzer, who admits he often feared his concept would flop. But as swing came back into fashion in the late '90s, he reaped chart success once again with the Brian Setzer Orchestra albums *Dirty Boogie* and *Vavoom!*

Setzer seems to have come full circle now with the release of *Ignition*—a blazing rockabilly romp that features his first three-piece band since the Stray Cats. It has been 20-something years since Setzer revitalized roots-rock, and *Ignition* showcases his most explosive guitar playing yet.



How does it feel to be playing in a trio again?

It's funny, because back in the '80s, people used to ask me, "Don't you find it restrictive being in a three-piece rockabilly band?" Now they're saying, "Wow, it must feel really free to play in a three-piece rockabilly band again." After nine years of playing with the big band, this is more rock and roll. There's more space to fill, so I definitely play more.

But you're not planning to retire the Brian Setzer Orchestra?

I'd like to continue doing both, if at all possible. A big band is expensive and a lot of work, but what a sound! I always dreamed

about having a big band. Even with the Stray Cats, those horns parts were always in my head—I would just play them on guitar. That's why it's so hard to even think about giving up the big band. It was—and still is—a real learning experience.

How does your new trio stack up against the Stray Cats?

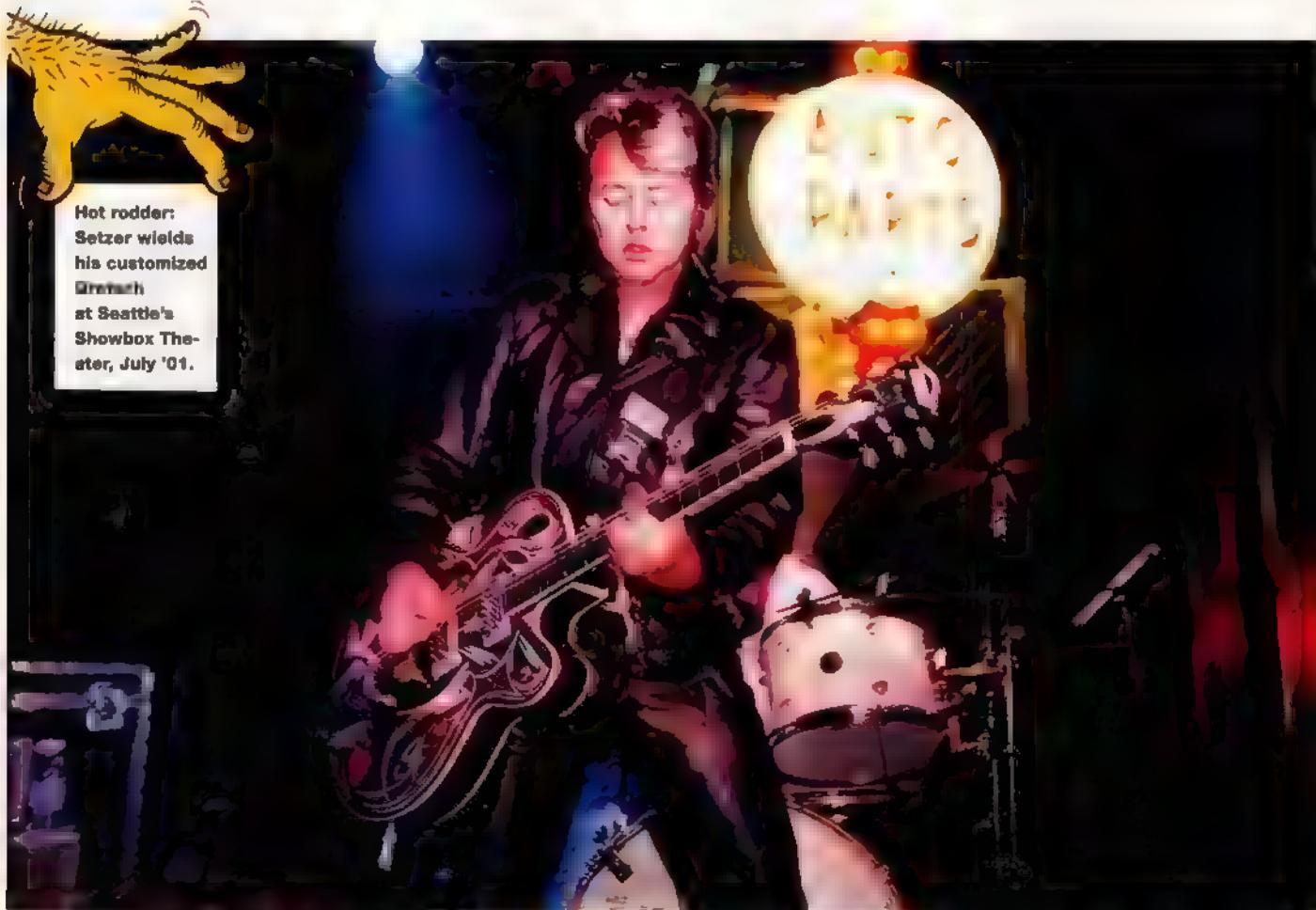
It's a tough comparison. I don't know if the Stray Cats could have made *Ignition*. Just because it was recorded with a three-piece doesn't mean it could be a Stray Cats record. But on the other hand, I don't think this trio could have made some of the Stray Cats stuff. We were 18 to 21 years old, we were waving the rockabilly flag, and we had a cause—that's a pretty unstoppable combination.

Why did you decide to name this band after Elvis' famous 1968 comeback performance?

My wife came up with it. I had grown these sideburns, and when I put on my black leathers, she looked at me and said, "Very '68 Comeback Special." Anybody who's into rockabilly would understand the significance of that performance—Elvis came back lean and mean, and he rocked.

You're playing some great country guitar on Ignition. Who would you cite as your main country influences?

There's some Jimmy Bryant in there, and,



IGNITING THAT GREAT GRETSCHE SOUND

ON the road, Setzer totes a 6-string arsenal that includes a 1959 Gretsch 6120, several new Gretsch signature Hot Rod models, a TV Jones C Melody Baritone, an Ode 5-string banjo, and a Danelectro 6-4 double-neck—all fastidiously maintained by guitar tech Rich Modica.

"The pinstriped Hot Rod is Brian's newest guitar," says Modica. "It has a Gibson ABR-1 Tune-o-matic bridge fitted with drilled-out aluminum saddles. It's a great setup. The saddles move around pretty freely in the ABR-1 design—which helps prevent binding with the Bigsby—and the aluminum adds a nice ring and enhances resonance. This guitar also has the new TV Jones Patent-Applied-For Filter 'Trons. I gave one of my original '59 Filter 'Trons to Tom [a.k.a. TV Jones], and he sent it

out to have the materials analyzed. Now he's able to make exact replicas of Filter 'Trons with the correct magnets and brass covers." (Information on these pickups is available at tvjones.com.)

Setzer's Gretsches are superbly set up and sport beautiful fretwork, courtesy of Jones, who installs the Dunlop 6105 fret wire. "Tom trims the fret height down a bit, and gives the frets a triangular crowning and nice, bulbous ends," adds Modica. "We use .010-.046 D'Addario strings, and every other string change I touch-up the saddles and nut slots with very fine emery cloth to eliminate burrs. Then I finish off by putting a tiny amount of a graphite/oil mixture into the nut and bridge slots. That helps a lot with a Bigsby, as do the locking Sperzel tuners, which also improve the tone by adding mass to the headstock."

Setzer's 1959 6120, which has re-

ceived tons of attention from both Modica and Jones, was used for the lion's share of *Ignition*. "The guitar has the original pickups, but we installed a Tune-o-matic and Sperzel tuners," says Modica. "Tom also replaced the entire headplate in order to re-drill the tuner holes (which had been misaligned at some point) and he removed the zero fret. The nut is made of Delrin, and it's angled quite steeply to shorten the string path across the nut. That's another thing that helps keep the Bigsby in tune, and we're using Delrin nuts on all of Brian's Gretsches. To keep a Bigsby working properly, it's important to keep the cam surfaces oiled. I also try to find a spring that kicks the bar up to a good height without making it feel stiff. I have bags of old springs, and I'll go through them all until I find the right one."

"The Filter 'Trons are medium output, so it's important to keep them close to the strings. On Brian's guitars, I set the bridge pickup polepieces about 5/32" from the top of the cover to the bottom of the strings. The neck pickup is set a little lower to compensate for the additional string energy."

Setzer's recent adoption of the TV Jones C Melody Baritone (strung .013-.060) added yet another opportunity for Modica and Jones to push the boundaries of Gretsch tone. "On

this guitar, Tom installed Strat polepieces in the neck pickup in order to provide better definition," explains Modica.

"It's just one of the ways we experiment with Filter 'Trons to see if we can improve the design, or develop a slightly different tonal color that Brian might be able to use." —AT



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STRAY CAT STRUTS

of course, Chet Atkins, Hank Garland, and Merle Travis. Those guys had the knowledge of country and jazz, and they were really ahead of their time in the way they twisted those styles together.

One of your rockabilly influences, Cliff Gallup had a pretty unorthodox way of picking with a flatpick and fingerpicks. Did you try to incorporate his technique into your playing?

When I was learning, I wanted to flatpick. But I also wanted to play like Scotty Moore. I realized I couldn't do both, so I developed this way of tucking the pick into my palm so my thumb

and fingers would be free. I knew those guys were using their thumbs and fingers, but I didn't know exactly how they did it. It was kind of like learning to ride a bicycle—one day I suddenly knew how to do it. I remember getting the melody going with my thumb—it was like, "Oh man, I think I've got it!"

What made you start using jazz chords for rock and roll?

After my first teacher taught me everything he knew, he recommended me to a guitarist named Ray Govert, who taught me jazz. By the time I was a teenager, I was throwing in these jazzy substitutions just to relieve the boredom of hearing the same old chords over and over. It just made sense to substitute chords and jumble all this stuff together.

Have you ever worried about getting too jazzy for rock and roll?

I look at people when I'm playing this stuff—like the jazz chord turnaround and the fingerpicking on "8 Track" [from *Ignition*]—

and they're going, "Wow!" So I know it connects. I never want to lose the audience. I'm always looking at the crowd to see how they're reacting to what I'm doing.

On "8 Track," you're mixing jazz and country. What's going on there?

I wrote the solo first, and I thought, "Cool—I've got to write a song around that." The typical thing to do would have been to make up a I-IV-V fingerpicking thing. But then I changed the chords around a little with the $G\flat 7$ to $B7$, and those other voicings. When the solo hits, I go into that flatpicking style, and I just play along with all those crazy chords: $E9$, $E\flat 9$, $E9$, $E\flat 9$, $D9$, $C\sharp 9$, $F\sharp m7$, $B7$, $E7$, $Gm6\sharp 5$, $Gm6$, $F\sharp m7$, $B13$, and $B7$. The trick is mixing it up by doing the flatpicking thing over the jazz stuff.

How would you advise someone who wants to learn how to mix styles in this manner?

I can't say it enough—you have to learn how to read and write music. You don't even have to be fluent, but you'd be amazed at what



Stray Cat Scratches

learning all this stuff connects in your brain. Learning scales and chords and how to play jazz helps you connect the dots. Then you can start fingerpicking the jazz chords, or flatpicking some of the scales that are related to those chords. That's what I'm doing on "8 Track."

You do a similar thing on "Hot Rod Girl," which is a rock song with jazzy changes.

Here again, what makes it fun for me is alternating the rock stuff with some altered chords in the turnaround. Also, throwing in those stops while the bass keeps going—that's what makes it a song rather than just another I-IV-V thing. I also voiced the guitar intro to sound like a car horn.

The solo is very jazzy, too.

Yeah, I was going for a Cliff Gallup thing. That's probably the most Stray Cats-sounding song on the album.

You do a great job of implying horns on the title track.

Yeah, I could write a horn chart for that [sings a horn line while playing the intro]. That's the switchblade-and-leather-jacket side of rockabilly because it's in a minor key. It's all about that opening riff, which I bring up an octave, and then one more octave. That song almost has a punk feel because it doesn't go to the V chord.

You ditch the country/jazz/rockabilly bag completely on "59," which sounds like a pop anthem.

It's all about the guitar riff. That song has a great melody, and the changes give it a real pop vibe. I was talking to my manager about how things from 1959 are so popular—like '59 Gretches, '59 Les Pauls, and '59 Cadillacs. He said, "Why don't you write a song about it?" I thought, "Huh? Yeah!" The music isn't from '59, though—it definitely goes in a different direction.

What did you use for tremolo on that song?

That's an old Fender Showman head that I plugged into one of my Bassman cabs. I also used that setup for "Five Years, Four Months, Three Days." I prefer to get tremolo from an amp. Stompbox tremolos always sound so on-off—there's no grease.

What do you use for tremolo live?

A Dunlop Tremolo [laughs]. My guitar tech switches it on and off for me.

What kind of acoustic did you play on "Santa Rosa Rita"?

That's a '56 Martin D-28. I never had an



The timeless glory of rockabilly: Cool hair, leathers, a burnin' Gretsch, two Fender Bassmans, and some echo.

acoustic, so I figured I might as well get the one everybody thinks is the best. When I got it, I realized why they're worth a lot of money. It has a beautiful sound.

How did you get such a crisp, ringing tone?

I was thinking Grady Martin, so I put on heavy strings, played with a flatpick, and miked it with a Neumann condenser.

You're playing some killer slide on "Who Would Love this Car But Me."

That's the first time I've ever played slide on a record. I wrote that song about [ex-Clash guitarist] Joe Strummer and his car. It's just a greasy slide part. I was fooling around in open-G, and I came up with that opening riff. I used a heavy glass slide, and played one of my Hot Rod Gretches.

What can you tell us about "Dreamsville"?

The rhythm guitar is the main thing there. There are actually two rhythm parts. I've got thumping jazz chords that I'm playing Freddie Greene-style underneath these rock chords. I do that Freddie Greene-style stuff a lot with the big band because it doesn't get in the way of the horns. I used my D'Angelico for the thumping stuff, and ran my Gretsch into an early-'60s blond Fender Twin for the rock parts.

"Malaguena" was an unexpected treat.

I've been playing that song since I was a kid, but I've never heard anyone else do it. I did some of the fingerpicking stuff live once, and the

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audience went nuts, so I arranged it for the record. That bolero in the middle—which nobody ever plays—is actually from a piece of sheet music I had as a kid. It was transcribed by Harry Volpe, who was the uncle of a guy I grew up with.

Does songwriting come pretty easy for you?

If I have a focus, and I know what I want the record to be, the stuff flies. If I don't know what I want to do, I struggle. Right now, I'm writing hot-rod rockabilly songs based around great Gretsch guitar riffs—that's my focus. It always starts with the guitar riff, and then I think about the story.

You've been playing early-'60s Fender Bassmans for years. What is it you like about that particular model?

I like them because their tone perfectly matches the Gretsch guitar. The combination of a closed-back cabinet and a solid-state rectifier makes for a tighter sound, which the Gretsch needs. Guys who use solidbody guitars tend to prefer the older Fender amps because they're mushier. But hollowbody guitars *breathe*—the sound comes out of the speaker and goes back through the guitar. That's why I need the punchier sound of a Bassman with a 2x12 cabinet.

How do you keep those old amps working reliably?

I take them to [ex-X guitarist] Billy Zoom, who replaces the filter caps and biases them properly. He also rewires the speaker cabinet with this really thick cable that can carry more current. The whole idea is to get the amps back to sounding the way they did originally, and then do a few little tricks—not to make them louder or more distorted, just to optimize them. We also install 30-watt Celestions. I like the way they sound, and they can take more punishment than the original Jensens.

What is it about 1959 Gretsch 6120s that you find so appealing?

Part of the magic is the way the top vibrates. I think Gretsch went wrong when they thickened the tops to make the guitar more resistant to feedback. A '59's top is only 1/8" thick, and that gives it a looser, midrange sound. The bracing that year was much lighter, too. We copied those specs for the Hot Rod model. I don't know, maybe someone at Gretsch said, "Hey, we can save so many cents per guitar if we just make the top thinner, the heel smaller, and use different bracing." All I know



"When I was learning, I wanted to flatpick," says Setzer. "But I also wanted to use my thumb and fingers like Scotty Moore."



is they got it right in '59.

How do the signature Hot Rod guitars compare to your '59?

Gretsch did all the mods I asked for. They put on the Tune-o-matic-style bridge, the locking Sperzel tuners, and the TV Jones Filter 'Tron replica pickups I like so much. They also shaved back the neck heel—which is important, because a big, chunky heel prevents you from playing past the 12th fret. We also got Gretsch to thin-down the tops, but that was a *big* ordeal. They made the prototypes and I loved them, but I recently checked out some Hot Rods in a music store and discovered the tops were thick again. I keep running into a brick wall at Gretsch over this. I don't know why they won't make the tops really thin like they did in '59.

Why did you do away with the individual volume controls and the tone switch on the Hot Rods?

I just use the master volume—the other knobs are always wide open. Eliminating the volume controls and the tone switch also gives you a hotter signal because you don't have all that extra wiring.

What do you like about the TV Jones Filter 'Trons?

They sound brighter and clearer than the originals. It's like Jones took 40 years of grime out of them. He actually had all the metals in the original pickup analyzed in order to reproduce it correctly. Then he improved it by spacing the polepieces more evenly and using longer polepiece screws. They just sound incredible. Filter 'Trons are the perfect middle ground between a humbucker and a Strat pickup. I can't get any tone out of humbuckers be-

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Stray Cat Strugs

cause they just break up, and that's not my sound. On the other hand, Fender pickups are too thin sounding—I can't get enough meat from them.

How did the C Melody Baritone come about?

That's another TV Jones design. I wanted to do "I Won't Stand in Your Way," which was a hit

for the Stray Cats. I'd never played it live, though, because it was always a bitch to sing that high. I've tried playing it in a lower key, but it doesn't have the same sound—you've got to have those strings ringing out. Then I tried this baritone guitar that Tom made, which was tuned to C. The sound of that thing is so butchin'—it just *rumbles*. I started using it just for that song, and now I want to do more songs with it.

What did you use for the low-tuned solo on "Five Years, Four Months, Three Days"?

That's a standard Danelectro Longhorn bass. I suggested they build a double-neck with a bass neck on top—like they used to make—and they built one for me. That's what I use live,

and it sounds great.

You're playing banjo onstage, too.

Yeah. It's an Ode 5-string, and I call it my punk-rock banjo. I think I've only recorded one track with a banjo—a song I wrote years ago called "Broken Man."

How do you amplify it?

It has a Shure SM98 mic in the shell, and a piezo pickup in the neck position. There are separate outputs, and we route the mic output straight to the board, and the pickup to a direct box.

Why do you prefer the Roland Space Echo to, say, a tube Echoplex?

I actually used a tube Echoplex on the album this time, but they're a pain in the neck. They'll just stop working for no apparent reason, and they have antique parts that just aren't up to par. Even a Space Echo can be problematic, but it's a big part of my sound. I like its wobbly delay—it's not perfect like a digital delay—and it lends a bit of overdrive and top-end sheen to the Bassman. They travel well, too. The biggest problem with a Space Echo is that the Roland tapes are nearly impossible to find. We recently found some new tapes on eBay, but we had to pay about \$400 for six of them! It's worth it, though, because the Space Echo gives you all those extra qualities.

Do you use the Space Echo's reverb, too?

No. If I'm going to use reverb, I'll use an old Fender tube unit.

How did you create the regeneration and explosion effects on "Hell Bent"?

I used two Space Echoes while I was mixing so I could add more delay when the signal came back to the board. When we started the record I said, "I want plenty of the things we like—guitars, slap bass, calfskin heads on the drums, tube mics, and lots of echo and reverb." We went in with that in mind, and after the tracks were recorded, I was still adding echo and reverb—especially on "Hell Bent." That crash you referred to is a cheap Airline reverb unit that we just shook the hell out of [laughs]. It sounds like a gun going off. I love doing that stuff organically. I could have made that explosion sound with some new device, but it's more fun to get it from an old \$5 reverb.

Why don't you use reverb live?

Live is different than the studio. When you're playing live, you've got a whole room making reverb. In the studio, you have a mic that's an inch from the speaker, so you have to use a little reverb to give the sound dimension. Reverb makes the sound too washy live—I prefer to just use delay.

You seem to vary your delay settings quite a bit.

Yeah, I switch delay times a lot. When I play "Sleepwalk," I use a bunch of spaced-out echoes. For the rockabilly stuff, I go for a tighter

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echo and turn down the echo volume. Rockabilly doesn't need to be too overdriven—you want it to be really twangy and ballsy. Something like "Hell Bent" is actually on the edge of sounding like Southern rock. That's about as loud as you want an echo to get—otherwise it starts sounding too broken up.

What kind of mic did you use to record your amp in the studio?

Normally, I use Shure SM57s, but this time, John [Holbrook, engineer] had me try these new Royer ribbon mics. All I know is that he put them up, and the tone was instantly there. We just had to move the mic around the speaker a little to find the sweet spot.

Ignition sounds very spontaneous. Did the band play together on all the tracks?

Yeah. We usually nailed the songs in the first couple of takes. And if we didn't, it was usually because of my guitar tone. Mark [Winchester, bass] and Bernie [Dresel, drums] would play it perfectly, and I'd go, "I know I can do it a little better." If we didn't get it in the first two or three takes, we'd move on to another song. With rockabilly, you've got to capture it right away.

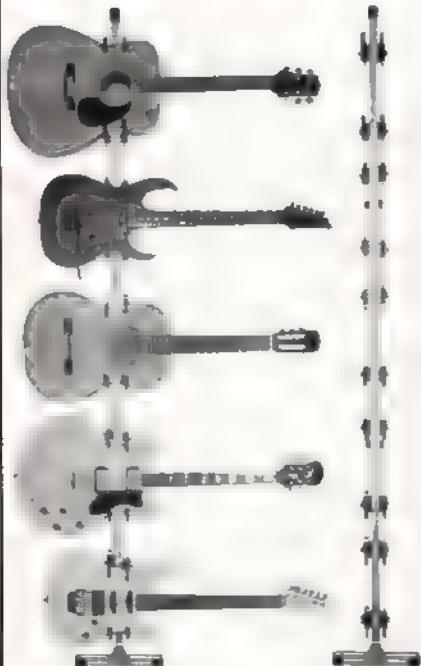
Did you play the solos live, too?

Yeah. You lose something when you try to overdub a solo. It lacks balls, and that "Where am I going?" feeling that's so important.

Why did you decide to switch from Interscope to an indie label like Surfdog?

I just couldn't make another record on a major label. A big machine like Interscope is so oriented to getting your song on the radio, and until they hear that song, your record isn't done. It took me a year and a half to make *Vavoom*, and that's too long for me. Also, when you're with a big label you're dealing with radio stations that only want to play what's trendy. I just couldn't think of going through that again—having to compete with the Backstreet Boys and Britney Spears to get my songs on the radio. Lastly, Tom Whalley—the guy who signed the big band—was leaving Interscope, so there was nothing there for me anymore. When you sign with a record label, you're really signing with someone who believes in you. If he or she goes away, you don't have a chance in hell, because there are so many internal politics in a record company. I wanted to simplify everything, and, as a result, this is the first time I've been allowed to make a record the way I want.

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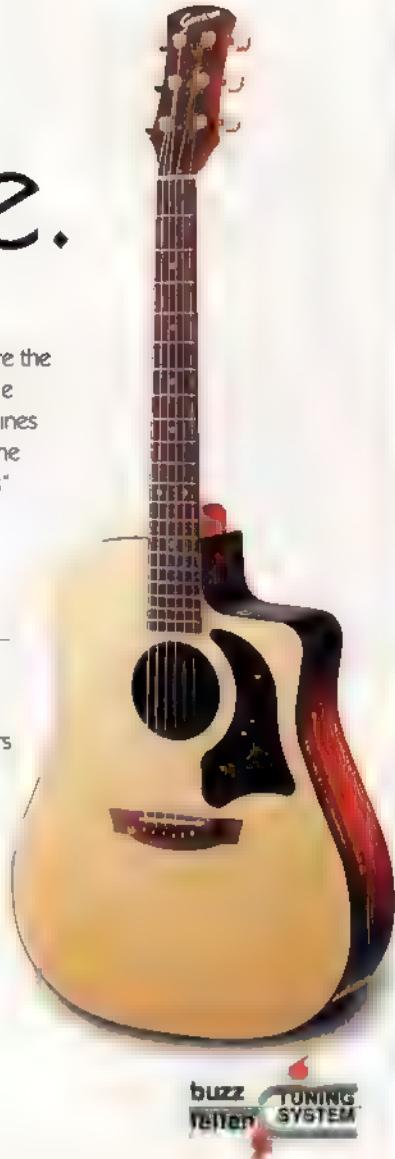
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Reviews Something Happening Here

Sharp-dressed men (left to right): Dewey Martin, Richie Furay, Stephen Stills, Bruce Palmer, and Neil Young rock the *Hollywood Palace* TV show on January 26, 1967.



AUDIO



Buffalo Springfield
Buffalo Springfield

Despite lasting less than two years in the late '60s, Buffalo Springfield had a profound and enduring impact on American rock. Both Stephen Stills and Neil Young began their profes-

sional careers in this Los Angeles-based quintet, and, in the process, perfected the art of dual-lead guitar. These two head-strong (and often contentious) pickers created intricate layers of fuzzy riffs, tremolo-laced chords, Bigsby-wrangled hammers, and ringing flat-top lines that still sound fresh today.

Buoyed by guitarist Richie Furay, and the remarkable rhythm section of bassist Bruce Palmer and drummer Dewey Martin, Stills and Young found ways to seamlessly meld tripped-out, psychedelic solos with bluegrass, folk, and honky-tonk twang.

The band's saga is captured in Rhino's magnificent four-CD compilation, which Young painstakingly assembled at his ranch near Northern California's Santa Cruz mountains. The recordings begin in the spring of '66 and stretch to early '68, when the group dissolved as a result of internal friction, drug busts, deportation, exhaustion, and—despite the chart success of "For What It's Worth"—a general lack of commercial success.

Disc 1 contains 13 previously

unreleased demos, as well as 11 songs from *Buffalo Springfield*, the band's first album. The songs are organized in chronological order, so we're able to hear early acoustic-and-vocal efforts by Stills, Young, and Furay, and trace their growth as singers, players, and writers. As the tracks morph from acoustic to ensemble productions, we hear how the band quickly gained maturity and focus from playing shows at the Troubadour and Whisky a Go-Go on L.A.'s then-infamous Sunset Strip.

The odyssey continues on disc 2, which offers 15 unreleased recordings, as well as six songs from the group's second album, *Buffalo Springfield Again*. Disc 3 includes nine unreleased tracks, and the lion's share of *Last*

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Reviews

Time Around—which was recorded as the band was disintegrating. It's here that Stills emerges with a fat, snaky lead tone. His solos in "Special Care," "Questions," and "Uno Mundo" are essential listening for anyone drawn to '60s acid-drenched guitar.

Disc 4 presents the first two albums—the ones that represent the group as a functioning whole—in their unbroken entirety. While the first three discs follow the Buffalo Springfield's sometimes rambling musical journey, this final disc reveals the band at the height of its power.

This collection makes it abundantly clear that the roots of California country rock and today's Americana can be traced to two bands: the Byrds and Buffalo Springfield. And while some of Springfield's contemporaries featured electrifying guitar playing—Moby Grape, the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and Quicksilver Messenger Service spring to mind—none could touch Furay, Stills, and Young when it came to weaving 6-string textures around compelling lyrics and vocal harmony. If you're intrigued by guitar orchestrations, you'll derive hours of satisfaction from this vital music. **Rhino.** —ANDY ELLIS

Christina Branco

Post-Scriptum

Young Portuguese vocalist Branco offers a sleek, modern version of *fado*, her nation's traditional song style. Even though she eschews the heavy melodrama of traditional *fado* in favor of a lighter, jazz- and pop-tinted delivery, she never loses touch with the profound melancholy at the heart of the genre. Her accompanists manage a similar sleight-of-style—they navigate near-constant tempo and dynamic changes with the precision of a fine classical ensemble, yet their performances always have a limber, off-the-cuff feel. Playing the traditional 12-string *guitarra portuguesa*, Custódio Castelo offers sublime counterpoint to Branco's soprano. His phrases tend to start assertively, only to trail off into tentative introspection. Many passages feel less like solos than sighs. And as *Post-Scriptum* proves, a good sigh can resonate more than a scream. **Harmonia Mundi** —JOE GORE

Tom McCarthy

The Electric Distant Surfacing

Somewhere in the shadows between Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* and John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* lies the inspiration behind Tom McCarthy's *The Electric Distant Surfacing*. Though McCarthy's musical odyssey

takes place on CD, the flagship track, "Noesis," resurrects a sonic idiom from the vinyl age—the album-side length, avant-garde jazz cut. At 20-plus minutes, McCarthy's epic composition opens in direct tribute to Coltrane, then departs on a wild sonic voyage. McCarthy plays off the wild rhythmic improvisations of veteran drummer Bob Moses, but explores more than just melodies and modal clusters. With wah wah pedals, sharp-toothed distortion, and a host of ambient effects, the guitarist forges exciting sounds on every track—making the album as much a timbral experience as a harmonic one. **Cosmic Vending Machine.** —RUDE GOLD

Chris Whitley

Rocket House

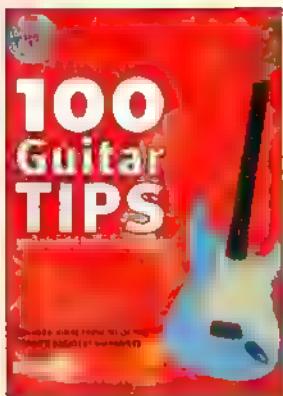
All too often, when people talk about a roots-oriented player putting drum loops and turntables on a record, it means that the record sucks. Thankfully, that is not the case with the latest Chris Whitley release, *Rocket House*. Despite the updated technology (and guest appearances by Dave Matthews and Bruce Hornsby), Whitley manages to sound exactly like himself, with all his trademark guitar tones and soulful vocals. Acoustic guitars, scratchy Dobro parts, banjo, and funky wah riffs provide cool splashes of color to Whitley's eerie, sparse arrangements. *Rocket House* is chock-full of trippy backwards guitars that, at times, sound like cellos, didjeridus, and Gregorian chants. For fans of Whitley's righteous "Big Sky Country"-style work, this is the record you've been waiting to hear. **ATO.** —MATT BLACKETT



The George Benson Quartet

The George Benson Cookbook

Originally released in 1966, this expanded reissue (four bonus cuts are included) shows why it's not heresy to mention George Benson in the same breath as Wes Montgomery. With Hammond organ master Lonnie Smith guesting, Benson and company burn with a swinging funkiness. Benson's scary solo chops are all over *Cookbook*, but it's his sick comping on tunes like "Ready and Able" that really shows his harmonic mastery of the instrument—and he was only 23 years old! *Cookbook* should ride along side *The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery* in every guitarist's record collection. **Columbia.** —DARRIN FOX



David Mead

100 Guitar Tips You Should Have Been Told

Ever wish you could get a personal glimpse into Joe Satriani's creative process, or phone Paul Gilbert for some practicing tips? That's essentially what *100 Guitar Tips* offers—hot tips, straight from world-class players such as Satch, Gilbert, Eric Clapton,

Frank Zappa, Mark Knopfler, Buddy Guy, and Pat Metheny. The famous-name insights are doled out in bite-size portions, while the primary content is provided by author David Mead, editor of the British guitar mag *Guitar Techniques*.

Mead addresses challenges that most guitarists are bound to face at one point or another, such as rhythmic development, scale and mode applications, and improvisation. He also touches on fundamental issues—holding the pick, barre-chord basics, and string bending. All of the lessons are presented clearly, with a minimum of frills and distractions, and an audio CD helps bring examples off the page and into your hands. *100 Guitar Tips* is a helpful, inspiring tutor for players at almost any level. *Sanctuary*. —ADAM LEVY



Jimmy Wyble

The Art of Two-Line Improvisation

When you're ready to recalibrate your harmonic thinking, check this book out. Featuring 25 hyper-contrapuntal etudes by the great Texas jazzman Jimmy Wyble, this new edition is a massively improved version of the 1979 original. Engraving errors in the transcriptions have

PRINT

been cleaned up, and tablature has been added—making the pieces and exercises accessible to most guitarists. But the biggest improvement is the addition of a stellar CD. While some guitar books come with soulless, click-track rigged recordings, editor David Oakes delivers sterling renditions of Wyble's challenging fingerstyle pieces.

With daring melodicism and constant counterpoint, these two-part etudes pour adventurously and organically through chord progressions like rivers through canyons. And each composition has a lyrical, improvised feel that will help you paint your own contrapuntal pictures on a tricky harmonic canvas. *Mel Bay*.

—JUDE GOLD



The Who

Who's Next

If there was ever a question as to the power and genius of the Who, this DVD answers it. Featuring interviews with Pete Townshend, Roger Daltrey, John Entwistle, and associate producer/engineer Glyn Johns, this killer 61-minute feature centers on the conception and making of the 1971 landmark album *Who's Next*. Highlights include Townshend's solo acoustic versions of "Behind Blue Eyes" and "Won't Get

"Fooled Again," live concert footage, and the participants sitting at the mixing board soloing tracks and playing alternate versions of key parts (an alternative solo on "Going Mobile" is particularly interesting).

The slickest portion of the feature shows Townshend in the studio detailing the nuts and bolts of the classic pulsating synth line of "Baba O' Riley." You're even treated to the original demo of the tune with Townshend playing all of the instruments. It's amazing to hear his version and compare it to the final product—it proves that, although Townshend was "the man," the Who sound existed because of *all* the members. *Image*.

—DARRIN FOX

Dream Theater

Metropolis 2000

Scenes from New York

It's no surprise that premier



prog-rock torchbearers Dream Theater display proficient musicianship on *Metropolis 2000*—which documents the band's live interpretation of 1999's *Scenes from a Memory* concept album—because, after all, guitarist John Petrucci, bassist John Myung, drummer Mike Portnoy, keyboardist Jordan Rudess, and vocalist James LaBrie are virtuosos. However, detractors of prog-rock—and maybe even some DT fans—will have plenty of reasons to torch the torchbearers here, as

DVD

some of the tastier, laidback sections from DT albums are injected with blitzkrieg solos that rob them of their original charm. Such is the case on "Through Her Eyes," where Petrucci's duet with guest gospel singer, Theresa Thompson is riddled with shred licks instead of the ethereally restrained, Jeff Beck-like solo from the album. In addition, producer Kevin Shirley is caught on film pinpointing the band's Achilles heel. In extolling Portnoy's drumming, Shirley relates having to "restrict" his playing on the album to get him to groove more. Portnoy reportedly replied, "Listen, dude, I've got to win some of these readers' polls." 'Tis a shame, because when these guys exercise a little restraint, they *rock*. *Elektra*.

—SHAWN HAMMOND

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Bench Tests

Combo Carnival

New Tube Amps from Spirit, Tone King, and Traynor

By Darrin Fox

It's not exactly front page news—a cranked amp delivers amazingly tactile and responsive tone. Of course, even in most gigging situations, it's tough to turn a 100-watt—or even a 50-watt—amp full up.

One way to get all of the sonic love without the mind-numbing volume is to invest in a low-

wattage combo. Sure, smaller amplifiers often require assistance from the P.A. to be heard above a band, but if you can get over that hurdle, you'll be rewarded with a great tone that won't put the hurt on your hearing. We tested these low-powered lovelies with a Fender Strat and Tele, and a Gibson Les Paul and SG Special.

Snapshot

The Spirit Studio Pro (\$695), Tone King Comet 20 (\$1,495), and Traynor Custom Valve 40 (\$649) are straightforward tube combos that run the gamut of power, features, and affordability. The Tone King Comet 20 and Traynor Custom Valve 40 each win Editors' Pick Awards.

Spirit Studio Pro

The class A Spirit Studio Pro (\$695) is a simple, affordable,

hand-wired combo that's ideal for practice or recording. The diminutive amp sports a rugged pine



Traynor Custom Valve 40 Features

- Dual channels
- Spring reverb
- 12" Celestion speaker
- Footswitchable boost
- 40 watts

cabinet that's clad beautifully in blond Tolex, and the oxblood grille cloth adds a cool, early-'60s Fender vibe. The only controls besides volume and 3-band EQ (treble, mid, and bass) are the Sparkle and Gain switches.

Inside its powder-coated steel chassis, the Studio Pro exhibits a neatly bundled circuit that flaunts an abundance of retro-approved cloth wire on a fiber-eyelet board—much like a vintage Fender amp. All pots and switches are chassis mounted, as are the tube sockets, which grip a single Electro-Harmonix 6V6, two Sovtek 12AX7s, and a SAR4 rectifier. Rounding out the old-school flavor is a 10" Weber alnico speaker.

Dialing in happening tones on the Studio Pro is a snap, and the amp has an amazing ability to sound boisterous at very low volumes. In fact, even at whisper levels, traces of breakup and snarling midrange are still present. The cleaner tones are squarely in the classic Fender tweed mold—think rich and meaty, rather than clear and spanky. The Sparkle switch adds some top-end sheen, but it's rather subtle. The best clean tones were obtained by cranking the Spirit and backing off the guitar's volume control.

Turned up, the Spirit belts out Keith Richards-style snarl and a throaty, focused midrange. The EQ

Spirit Studio Pro Features

- 10" Weber alnico speaker
- 3-band EQ
- Sparkle control
- seven watts



Tone King Comet 20 Features

- Effects loop
- Dual channels
- Midrange bite control
- Spring reverb
- 20 watts



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-Marcus Miller

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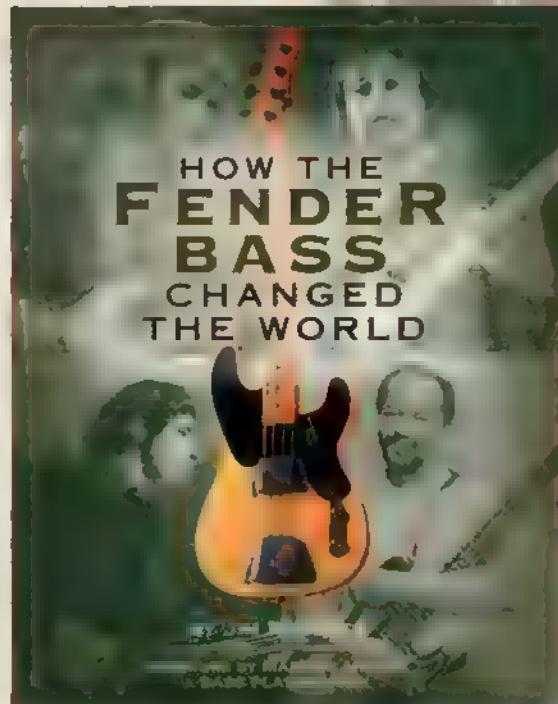


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Bench Tests

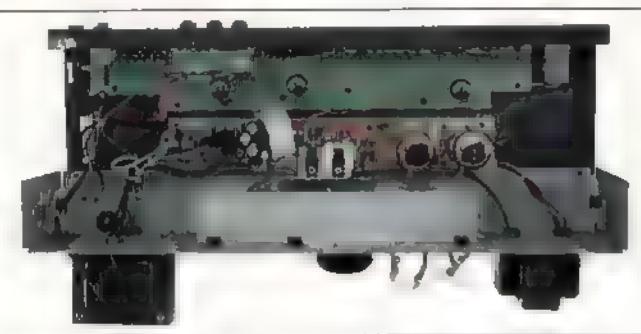
Combo Carnival

won't accommodate drastic tonal tweaking, but it hardly matters, as

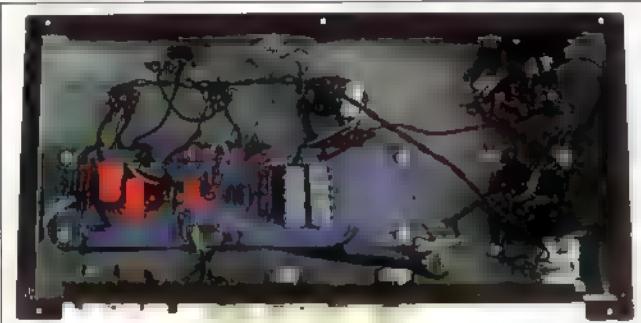
the Spirit's basic voice is full and musical. The Gain switch is also subtle, though it can be helpful for adding girth to single-coils—



Vintage exterior, modern interior: The Tone King Comet 20.



Canadian pride: The Traynor Custom Valve 40's PC board interior.



Old school cool: The Spirit Studio Pro's retro circuit.

Contact Info

Spirit Amplifiers, Box 85, Liverpool, NY 13088; (877) 776-2677; spiritamps.com.

Tone King, 1301 S. Baylis St., Ste. 127, Baltimore, MD 21224; (410) 327-6530; toneking.com.

Traynor, dist. by Yorkville Sound, 4625 Witmer Industrial Estate, Niagara Falls, NY 14305; (716) 297-2928; yorkville.com.

especially at lower volumes.

At seven watts, the Studio Pro is essentially a recording tool. To that end, I simply positioned a Shure SM57 right on the speaker, and was immediately greeted with a sound that sat beautifully in the track. The Studio Pro's midrange complexity and punch are impressive, and they add an elegant toughness to the sound of this tiny amp. Think Stones tones on *Exile on Main Street*, and you'll get the idea.

Tone King Comet 20

Tone King amps are perhaps best known for their kitschy, '50s-furniture cosmetics. The company's newest model, the dual-channel Comet 20 (\$1,495), offers stunning looks as well, but in a more low-key fashion with flawlessly applied brown-on-cream Tolex. For a little extra class, the full-size Accutronics reverb tank is also covered in matching Tolex.

The Comet delivers 20 watts into an Eminence-designed 12" speaker, and the tube complement consists of two Electro-Harmonix 6V6s, three 12AX7s, and a SAR4 rectifier—all cooled by a chassis-mounted fan. Inside the anodized aluminum chassis, the

components are mounted on a large PC board. The top-mounted controls include volume, treble, mid, and bass for the rhythm channel, and volume, tone, and mid-bite for the lead side. A global reverb knob is also provided.

A nice feature that you don't normally see on low-powered, boutique-type amps is an effects loop with a series/parallel switch. Other back panel amenities include jacks for an extension speaker, a line out, and the included channel footswitch.

Firing up the Comet, I was immediately impressed by its exceptionally well-voiced tone controls. The rhythm channel glistens with sweet, sparkly highs—no trace of ice-pick treble frequencies—and when you crank it up, you're rewarded with a dynamic crunch that can punch its way through a band. The Comet has the ability to bring out all the nuances of your string attack, and I was also able to *really* hear the tonal differences of each pickup setting on a Strat.

Switching to the lead channel, you get tough, snarling tones with snottiness to spare. Dime the gain, and creamy lead lines are the order of the day—no matter what guitar is plugged in.

The Ratings Game	Tone	Workmanship	Features	Vibe	Value
Tone King Comet 20	5	5	5	5	5
Traynor Custom Valve 40	5	5	5	5	5
Spirit Studio Pro	5	5	5	5	5

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Combo Carnival

Backing off your guitar's volume control yields a gutsy clean tone ripe with honky midrange. The reverb is amazingly lively and rich, too. Simply stated, the Comet 20 is a beautiful-looking, great-sounding amplifier that's absolutely inspiring to play.

Traynor Custom Valve 40

Originally hailing from Canada—the country that gave the world Moosehead beer, hockey, and Anne Murray—Traynor amplifiers have become highly sought-after pawnshop prizes. Founded in the early '60s by Pete Traynor, the amps earned a reputation for being well built, affordable, and good sounding. Now, Yorkville Sound has brought back the Traynor moniker, and the two-channel Custom Valve 40 (\$649) does the name justice.

The Custom's cabinet construction is clean, although the Tolex covering is sloppy in places. Inside the ventilated steel chassis, all the components are mounted on three PC boards, including the two Sovtek 5881 power tubes and three 12AX7s. The top-mounted control panel offers 3-band EQ for the clean channel, as well as a presence control and a bright switch. The lead side sports 3-band EQ, a gain control, and a footswitchable boost function. Moving around to the back panel, you find an effects loop and a difficult-to-access extension speaker jack that's tucked way underneath the chassis. The speaker is a 12" Celestion Seventy 80.

Tonally, the Custom falls between a beefed-up Fender Deluxe Reverb and a modified Marshall plexi. Easily the loudest of the amps tested, the Custom sports a clean channel that is bright and glassy with single-coils. In fact, unless you have a particularly tubby-sounding humbucker guitar, the bright switch probably won't see much use. As you begin cranking the clean side, shades of grind start creeping in. But even when running this channel flat-out, the tones still clean up well when you turn down your guitar. Adding any amount of reverb (which is provided by a full-size Accutronics tank), only adds to the Traynor's expansive tone.

The Custom's lead side has warm, punchy gain to spare. You can't dial up super-scooped heavy tones, but the distortion is nice and brown with tons of midrange. Even at bedroom volume levels, notes sing with excellent definition and dynamics. The boost function piles on more gain without changing the EQ character—the amp just gets louder and meaner. It's like getting a third sound from a two-channel amp.

The Custom Valve 40 is an amazing deal. You get a flexible amplifier with great tones, in a package that'll fit in the backseat of your car. And, at \$649, you'll have plenty of gas money left over.

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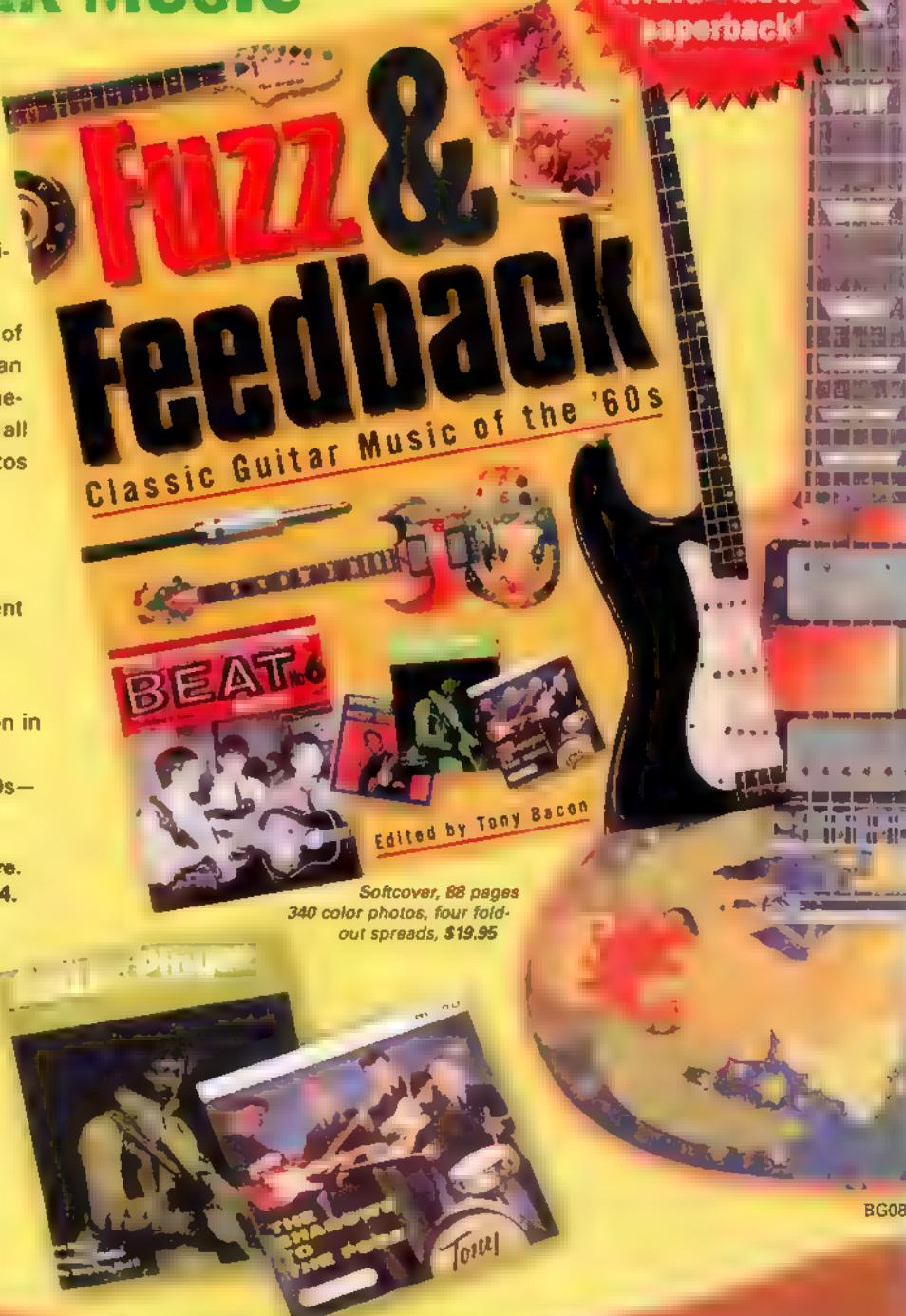
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Bench Tests

A Better Mousetrap?

Farnell EXP-K

By Art Thompson

The solidbody guitar lends itself to a wide variety of alternative construction materials, and now that we've seen guitars made from aluminum, fiberglass, steel, graphite, masonite, plywood, and MDF (an acronym for particle board), what's left?

If you ask Farnell Guitars, the answer is foam. It's not so far fetched, either. Check out how a surfboard is built, and you basically have a piece of high-density foam sheathed in fiberglass or polyester—a tough structure with a high strength/weight ratio and excellent resistance to the elements. Now imagine cutting a guitar body out of a surfboard, fitting it with a bolt-on neck, and attaching pickups and hardware. This isn't exactly how Farnell guitars are made, but it's close.

Foam Alone

The \$799 EXP-K, the lowest-priced model in Farnell's line, is a Korean-made instrument with

Snapshot

The Farnell EXP-K (\$799) is a lightweight, bolt-on-neck guitar that uses a hybrid foam/wood body to deliver enhanced resonance and sustain.



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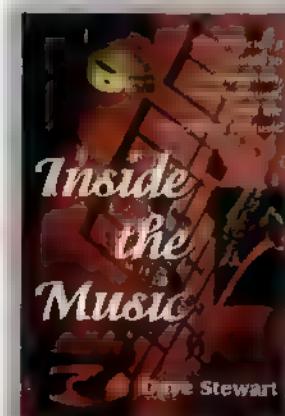


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Bench Tests

A Better Mousetrap?

a bold shape that incorporates comfy, Strat-like contours. At 6.3 lbs, the EXP-K is lighter than most wood-bodied electrics, and it also offers enhanced resonance—thanks to a mahogany center block that forms the neck joint, and allows string vibrations to radiate freely throughout the body. Strum this guitar acoustically, and it feels almost as lively as a thin-line archtop. Liveliness aside, the EXP-K differs little from an all-wood guitar. The four-bolt neck joint is rounded for comfort and easy high-fret access. The slim, satin-finished neck is very comfortable, and the wide, rather low frets are well-trimmed and polished. The detail work is excellent. The body's finish is mirror smooth, and the gold hardware and pearloid pickguard look great against the deep blue color. The matching headstock is a cool touch, and it grooves well with the gold Gotoh die-cast tuners.

Foam Tones

The EXP-K plays extremely well, too. Despite our test model's low action, notes sounded clear and buzz free right up to the highest frets. Plugged into a selection of amps (including a Vox AC30, a Fender Twin Reverb, and a Marshall JCM 800), the EXP-K delivers full-bodied tones that range from clear and ringing to thick and chunky. The neck and middle single-coils sound cool for wailing blues solos and meaty chords, and the bridge humbucker packs plenty of amp-clobbering crunch. There's a nice sense of coherency to the tones, and you can really nail the bridge

pickup without entering the shrill zone. The tone control muffles the highs excessively when turned all the way down, but you can back off the volume without losing detail. The EXP's enhanced sensitivity is a double-edged sword: The guitar feels very alive—and sustained notes are easily coaxed into feedback—but you also get a thumping sound through your amp whenever your hand slaps against the body or bridge. The light body also makes

Contact Info

Farnell Guitars, 1544 E. First St., Pomona, CA 91766; (909) 629-9111; farnellguitars.com.

the guitar a tad neck heavy.

Less Wood Is Good

Farnell's foam/wood hybrid design is significant in light of the greater awareness on preserving the planet's diminishing wood supplies. But the cool thing about the EXP-K is that it doesn't sound all that different from a standard wood design. Farnell's technology

isn't likely to make wood guitars obsolete, but it definitely represents an evolution in guitar design. While the majority of non-wood guitars have either been prohibitively expensive or sonically displeasing, the EXP-K proves that it's possible to make an affordable electric from non-standard materials that even hardcore traditionalists can appreciate. ■



Heart of the matter:
The Farnell EXP-K
uses a combination of
mahogany and foam in
its body construction.

The Ratings Game	Tone	Workmanship	Features	Vibe	Value
Farnell EXP-K	4	4	3	4	4

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal =  Excellent = 

Echo & Twang

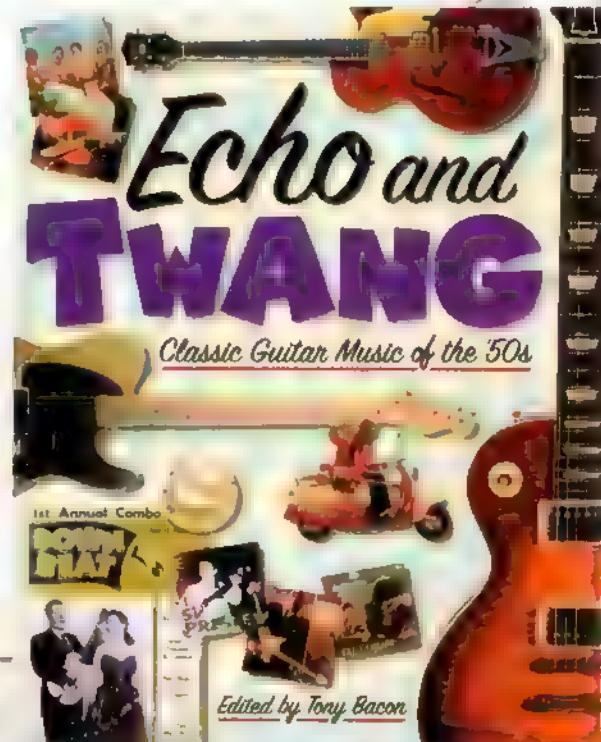
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Bench Tests

Tonal Purity

Hughes & Kettner Puretone

By Art Thompson

While Hughes & Kettner's primary focus has been on high-tech, multi-channel amplifiers, the company recently took a left turn. The Puretone (\$2,449 head; \$2,599 1x12 combo) enters boutique territory with a stripped-down circuit designed for those who subscribe to the less-is-more theory of guitar tone. To that end, the single-channel, class A Puretone is almost totally devoid of

belts and whistles—no boost switches, gain controls, footswitches, or effects loops. The amp uses a pair of Russian EL34s to deliver 40 watts at 8Ω (25 watts at 16Ω), and it features a three-stage Power Level switch that works by placing resistive loads on the output stage. The Puretone's controls include treble, middle, bass, master volume, and a unique Growl function that differs from a standard gain control by allowing you to

Snapshot

The Hughes & Kettner Puretone (\$2,449)—a boutique-oriented, single-channel tube amp—aspres to better tone via austerity. Unique among its few features is a Growl control, which increases gain by progressively removing the bass, middle, and treble controls from the circuit.

H & K Puretone Features

- Dual EL34s
- Growl control
- Treble, middle, bass, and volume controls
- Power Level switch



Bench Tests

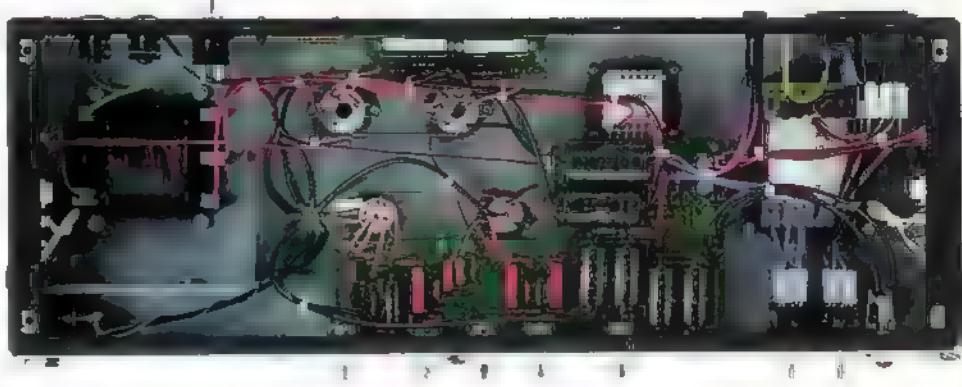
Tonal Purity

progressively remove the tone controls from the circuit.

Construction

The Puretone's super-clean circuit uses a PC board for the primary components (caps, resistors, pots, electrolytics), and a second, smaller board for the hefty power-reduction resistors. The ceramic tube sockets (including those for the two Russian 12AX7s) are bolted directly to the chassis, and all of the wiring is neatly soldered and routed. As on

Continued on page 157



The Puretone's minimalist circuit features neat wiring and lots of chassis-mounted components.

The Ratings Game	Tone	Workmanship	Features	Vibe	Value
Hughes & Kettner Puretone	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal = ♫ — Excellent = ♫ ♫ ♫ ♫ ♫

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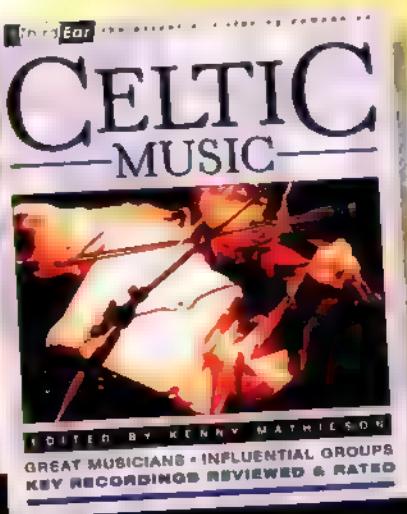
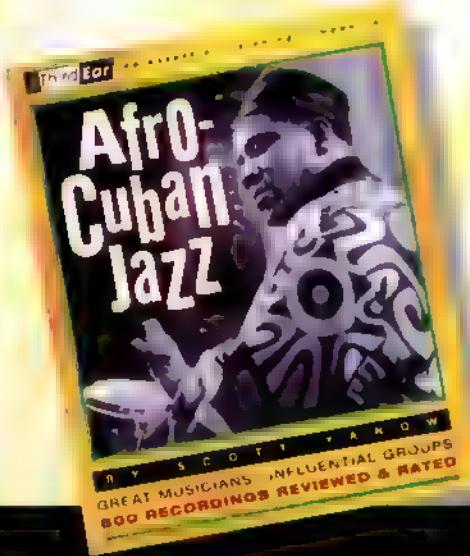
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By Scott Yanow

From Cuba to Puerto Rico to New York, an irresistible music began brewing in the 1940s. Blending bebop-based improvisations with Cuban and African rhythms, inventive musicians such as American trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and Cuban conguero Chano Pozo created a sizzling jazz style that still evolves today. This is the ultimate guide to every key Afro-Cuban jazz innovator past and present—Tito Puente, Poncho Sanchez, Chucho Valdés, Stan Kenton, and dozens more.

Scott Yanow edited the *All Music Guide to Jazz* and has written for such leading jazz magazines as *Cadence*, *JazzTimes*, *Downbeat*, and others.

Softcover, 212 pages, ISBN 0-87930-619-X, \$17.95

Celtic Music

Edited by Kenny Mathieson

Today's Celtic music hails from traditional homelands but also embraces new fusions from around the globe. This colorful guide captures the full flavor of this widely enjoyed music in all its forms—traditional, new Celtic, and Celtic-influenced. From the Chieftains to Christy Moore to Afro Celt Sound System, it explores solo artists, bands, singers and players of Celtic's unique instrumentation, including harps, pipes, fiddles, squeezeboxes, drums, mandolins, and more.

Kenny Mathieson writes for *Jazzwise*, *The Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald*, and organizes the annual Celtic Connections festival.

Softcover, 192 pages, ISBN 0-87930-623-8, \$19.95

Funk

By Dave Thompson

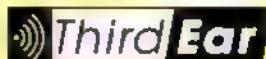
From funk's James Brown roots to today's Red Hot Chili Peppers, this guide tracks the music that mixes R&B and soul with a little rock 'n' roll. Profiling the artists who "get on the good foot," it explores classic funk, funky soul, Motown funk, white funk, funky psychedelic, and more—the funkiest groove from George Clinton, Sly and the Family Stone, Tower of Power, Curtis Mayfield, Chaka Khan, Average White Band, War, and many more.

Dave Thompson has written over 70 rock music books, including the best-selling *Never Fade Away: The Kurt Cobain Story*.

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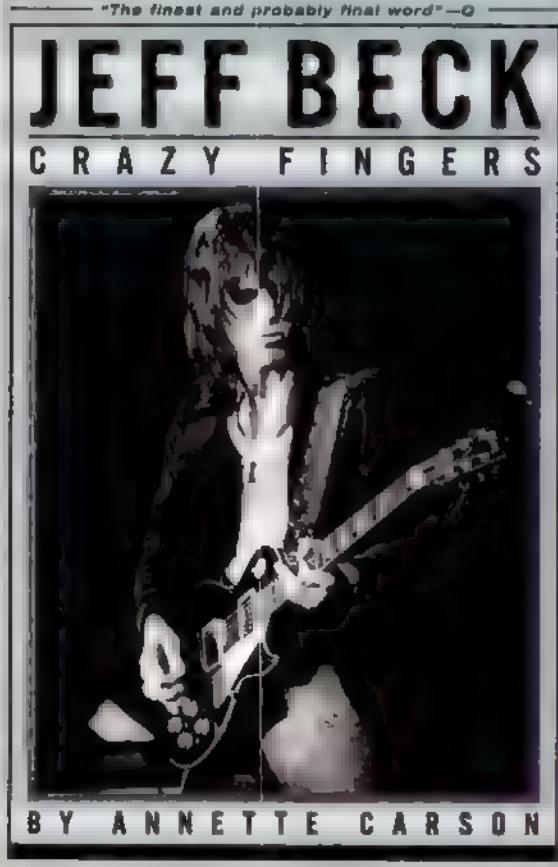
This enlightening book portrays Beck's trend-defying feats

against the musical landscape of the times, and explains his renowned disregard for convention—in his art and his life. You'll meet Beck before and with the Yardbirds, the Jeff Beck Group and beyond, and discover his musical and personal relationships with Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page, Buddy Guy, Rod Stewart, the Rolling Stones, Stevie Wonder, and countless other greats.

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Bench Tests

Filter King

Line 6 FM4 Filter Modeler

By Joe Gore

Guitarists have long appreciated the extended family of filter devices, which range from simple wahs andarty-sounding envelope followers to LFO-equipped units that can wheeze, wobble, swoosh, screech, and flicker. The Line 6 FM4 Filter Modeler (\$350) digitally covers the gamut of filter

sounds, and then some. It replicates a rogue's gallery of classic wahs and envelope followers, it coughs up fat analog-synth simulations, and it delivers some stunning original effects.

The pedal shares many features with its Line 6 siblings, the Delay, Modulation, and Distortion Modelers: a rugged metal hous-

Snapshot

The Line 6 FM4 Filter Modeler (\$350) offers 16 programs—some are modeled from classic filter effects, and others were devised by Line 6. All sounds are stellar, from the responsive envelope followers to the fat monophonic synth sounds. The Filter Modeler is a ton of fun, and it wins an Editors' Pick Award.

ing, a simple interface, stereo ins and outs (except the Distortion Modeler), the ability



to store four programs in memory, and, most important, a hip and helpful palette of



Bench Tests

Filter King

sounds rendered with extraordinary impact and realism.

But the Filter Modeler departs from family tradition in one key respect. While the other Line 6 Modelers focus on straight-up sonic replicas of vintage stompboxes, only one Filter Modeler program is a literal copy. Most of the pedal's 16 models mimic the sonic profiles of specific devices without attempting to reproduce all their features—not surprising, as most of the original gizmos are far too complex to capture in stompbox form. So while the Fil-

ter Modeler tips its hat to the Electrix Filter Factory, Oberheim Expander Module, and Roland GR700 and Korg X911 guitar synths, it doesn't reproduce them to the extent that, say, the Distortion Modeler clones a Fuzz Face. But the amazing thing about the Filter Modeler is just how thoroughly it *does* evoke the color and quirkiness of three decades' worth of analog-filter effects.

Mu-tations

The one vintage device that is replicated hook, line, and swooper is the Musitronics Mu-Tron III. The Mu-Tron's best-known

Contact Info

Line 6, 29901 Agoura Rd., Agoura Hills, CA 91301; (818) 575-3600; line6.com

sound—the dynamics-driven low-pass filtering that practically defines funk rhythm guitar—is conjured, in all its sleazy splendor, by the Tron Up and Tron Down settings. But unlike other latter-day envelope followers that reproduce only that tone, the FM4 recaps all the great colors offered by the original's band-pass and high-pass filters, and its reverse-sweep mode. You get the subtle washes, the paint-peeling squalls, the stuffy-nosed honks. And Line 6 has *nailed* the hair-trigger re-

sponse of the original.

The Z. Vex Seek Wah is imitated in the Seeker model—a patch that illustrates the sort of clever compromises the Filter Modeler tends to make. The original Seek Wah is a filter/sequencer that cycles through a chain of fixed-frequency band-pass filters. The Filter Modeler evokes the freaky flickering of the original, but unlike the Seek Wah, you can't set each filter peak independently. Instead, you select from nine pre-

Continued on page 146

The Ratings Game	Tone	Workmanship	Vibe	Value
Line 6 FM4	5	5	5	5

The Rate-O-Meter. Dismal =  Excellent = 

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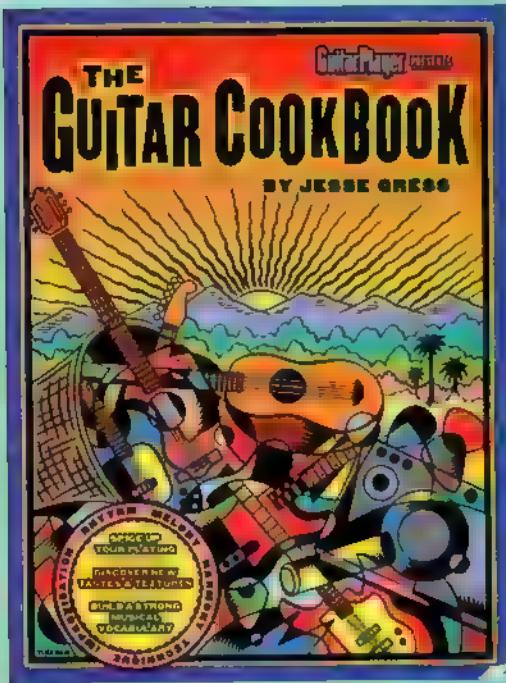
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Bench Tests Wah Zoo

Danelectro DW-1 Dan-O-Wah

By Matt Blackett

How something looks is not as important as how it works. Function should win out over form in all but the most superficial pursuits. But given the huge success of the iMac and the VW Beetle, it's pretty clear that so long as a product works great, there's no harm in making it look really cool. That is exactly the case with

the Danelectro DW-1 Dan-O-Wah (\$99). First and foremost, this pedal sounds amazing. Second, it has an absolutely *righteous* look. I tested the DW-1 with every guitar I could get my hands on, including Strats, Teles, Les Pauls, and a couple of funky Hagstroms. I plugged the Dan-O-Wah into a Tone King Comet 20, a Hughes & Kettner zenTera, a Fender Twin,

Snapshot

The Danelectro DW-1 Dan-O-Wah (\$99) features six preset wah flavors, a footswitchable distortion/octave effect, and a look that just plain rules. Because it's cool, fun, and sounds great, the Dan-O-Wah wins an Editors' Pick Award.

and a Marshall 401 combo.

Under the Hood

The Dan-O-Wah is housed in one of the coolest pedal enclo-

sures since the Fuzz Face. It looks like a cross between a stretched-out Batmobile and an old Buick. The headlights are input and output jacks and the tail lights



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Bench Tests

Wah Zoo

indicate wah status. The plastic housing doesn't inspire a tremendous amount of confidence, however, and the Danelectro tires that hold the screws on the underside

give the pedal a higher, SUV-style center of gravity that caused a couple of rollovers under extreme driving conditions. The treadle feels plasticky, but features a familiar, CryBaby-like throw.

All of the button and jack func-

Contact Info

Danelectro, Box 5030, San Clemente, CA 92674; (949) 498-9894; danelectro.com.

tions have been considerably silk-screened on the bottom of the Dan-O-Wah. Unfortunately, the labels reflect the view from the *top*

of the pedal. In other words, they're backwards when you're reading the underside. This isn't a big deal, but it will mess with your head the first

The Ratings Game	Tone	Workmanship	Vibe	Value
Danelectro Dan-O-Wah	4	3	4	3

The Rate-O-Meter: Dismal =  Excellent = 

Gizmo Alert Line 6 Echo Farm

Those lucky enough to have access to a Pro Tools Mix system just got luckier. Line 6 has introduced Echo Farm (\$495), a TDM plug-in of their popular DM4 Delay Modeler. Savvy pedal pushers already know the DM4, with its stellar impersonations of a half-dozen vintage delays is one of the best-sounding, best-designed effect units ever. Echo Farm is even cooler.

Echo Farm lets you store an infinite number of programs and automate every virtual knob. The automation feature is fantastic for conjuring squalls of delay feedback, subtly wobbling delay time, varying the wet/dry mix, and creating other echo tricks that are difficult to do in realtime without a third hand. You can input delay times numerically, via tap-tempo, or by rhythmic value. In the latter case, your track's tempo determines the actual delay time. Change the tempo and the delay speeds up or slows down accordingly. Echo Farm's onscreen graphics change to evoke the device being modeled, and you can even click on a question-mark icon to call up a descriptive blurb on the modeled device.

And the sounds! The Echoplex EP-3 simulation is warm and three-dimensional. The Echoplex EP-1 (Maestro's original tube

model) is a low-fi wonder with raunchy input overdrive and adjustable wow-and-flutter. The Roland Space Echo, Boss DM-2, and Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Memory Man clones are similarly faithful to the originals. Furthermore, Line 6 has added many well-considered refinements without compromising the original colors. You get increased delay time, more sophisticated tone controls, and extra virtual playback heads. And Line 6's original programs stack up well against the classics. The Sweep Echo and Reverse models are particularly delicious.

The delays sound superb on guitar, and they're so sweet you'll be tempted to pour them over all your tracks. But you won't be able to use too much Echo Farm—running the plug-in just once hogs an entire Mix chip. That's the main drawback, aside from the fact that it's only available in a Pro Tools Mix TDM version. Those with older Pro Tools systems, Digi 001s, or workstations that rely on native processing will have to turn elsewhere for retro-flavored delays.

—Joe Gore

Line 6, 29901 Agoura Rd., Agoura Hills, CA 91301; (805) 379-8900; line6.com.



Echo Farm (seen here as a plug-in within a Pro Tools session) mimics not only the sound, but the look of the modeled unit. Recognize the Roland Space Echo interface?



Here, the Echo Farm apes a Boss DM-2 analog delay, but with the added benefit of 2-band EQ.

Wah Zoo

few times you check out the controls.

Test Drive

When you plug into the Dan-O-Wah, the distortion effect is automatically activated whether you want it or not. I discovered this during soundcheck with my amp on the dirty channel. Doh! I turned off the distortion with the front left button, and began auditioning wahs. The left bank of buttons gives you three flavors of what Dano calls '60s wahs. Each setting has a slightly different voicing, and they all sound awesome—very vocal and vowel-like. It's easy to *really* chew on notes by manipulating the pedal. The Dan-O-Wah doesn't only "say" the notes—it can burp and puke them as well. Yeah! Even extreme pedal positions produce musical sounds, from wooly mammoth to funky mosquito. On a recording date for a TV commercial, the Dan-O-Wah proved very quiet and musical, but had no problem dishing out the over-the-top, exaggerated wah the producer wanted.

The right bank of switches gets you into the '70s with three brighter, narrower wah colors. These are a little trickier to handle than the '60s wahs, as the high frequencies can get out of control if you're not careful. Because of their hyped treble, however, these '70s presets do a great foot-controlled phasoid effect that can really

make low-string lines stick out. I liked the '60s side for traditional wah work, and I moved into the '70s for freakier filter effects.

The Dan-O-Wah's distortion effect has no controls except for an on/off switch. Engage the distortion, and you're greeted with a spitty, lo-fi fuzz that works great for snotty power chords through a clean amp. Drive the front end of a dirty amp, however, and look out! Every note you fret will sing, shriek, and howl with sustain. The distortion can be used with or without the wah, and—just in case things haven't gotten intense enough for you—you can add an octave effect to the distortion for searing "Purple Haze" sounds. Kick them all in at once, and I defy anyone in the club to ignore you!

The Dan-O-Wah features separate octave switches on both the '60s and '70s sides, and Danelectro suggests setting one side for octave and one without, so you can toggle between them by switching wah banks. This tip assumes you can quickly get to the switches on the top of the pedal that govern the wah banks and distortion effect. I was able to accomplish this on a gig, but it's not easy to do accurately—or without tipping the pedal over. Pointy-toed cowboy boots are recommended.

Wahs Up

Although the Dan-O-Wah is a bargain even if you use it for just one wah sound, it does have

two downsides: The pedal won't stand up to Zakk Wylde-style stomping abuse, and if you're the kind of gigger who throws all your boxes into a sack, it will definitely lose a fight with an Ernie Ball volume pedal. That said, if you're looking for a carload of hip wah sounds (and some fun bells and whistles), you'll find the Dan-O-Wah is a multi-talented pedal to park in your sonic garage. ■

Filter King

Continued from page 140

programmed sequences. It's less flexible, but the Filter Modeler compensates with the option of odd-numbered sequence lengths (the Seek Wah allows only 4-, 6-, and 8-step patterns).

Equally hypnotic is Obi-Wah, which is based on the random, sample-and-hold filter modulation of an Oberheim Voltage Controlled Filter. You get a choice of low-, band-, and high-pass filtering, and there's plenty of seizure-grade weirdness here. Another cool Oberheim-based sound is Slow Filter, an adjustable-bandwidth low-pass effect that sounds a bit like the Mu-Tron, only minus the dynamic sensitivity. It's great for generating aggressive riffs with face-slapping impact.

True blue.

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It combines a feature-rich Compressor/Limiter, Expander/Gate and Enhancer offering precise control. And its logical front panel layout with extensive metering makes it easy to use. The *plus* is for its useful De-Esser that removes sibilance from vocals and reduces overly bright audio. Most importantly, S-com plus's audio path employs super low-noise VCAs with vast headroom and imperceptible distortion for transparency and sonic integrity.

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The Voice Box model imposes vowel-like filter coloration. It doesn't really sound like a Talk Box, but it's a useful and subtle variation on a standard wah. A cool addition is the V-Tron setting, in which picking dynamics trigger the vowel filter, Mu-Tron style.

The Throbbler model replicates just one aspect of the powerful Electrix Filter Factory—the LFO section. As on the Electrix box, filter range and depth are more extreme than on most guitar-oriented filters. This model is great for modern flashing and flickering. The final non-synth program, Q Filter, is a stationary wah effect with enough bite to slice through almost any mix—or skull, for that matter.

Sizzling Synths

The Filter Modeler doesn't match the tonal range of a real synthesizer, but you have to marvel at how many colors it *does* generate. All four synth models are killer. The Synth-O-Matic is a hybrid effect derived from a half-dozen vintage synths, and it offers eight high-contrast waveforms—each with adjustable filter cutoff and width. Attack Synth, based on the Korg X9111 guitar synth, offers four more waveforms and adjustable attack times. Synth String reincarnates the wheezy-cool, faux-fiddles of Roland's GR700 guitar synth. A final synth model called Growler applies a Mu-Tron-style envelope follower to the GR700

strings. All the synth programs are particularly adept at forging floor-rattling bass lines.

You may encounter related tones from various synth pedals, but the Line 6 renditions smoke them all in aggression, fames, and tracking response. No joke—these tones are lethal. I've never attained better guitar-synth sounds without a dedicated hexaphonic synth pickup. Of course, the Filter Modeler's synth sounds are monophonic—and you must play with precise technique, preferably through the neck pickup—but the unit repays modest technical adjustments with massive audio carnage.

First-Time FX

The Filter Modeler's original tones more than hold their own against the classics. Spin Cycle, based on GP Techno Tools columnist Craig Anderton's Wah/Anti-Wah circuit, routes opposite wah sounds to the left and right channels. Heads will spin. Octisynth generates feedback-like overtones and wobbles them with LFO vibrato—expect monkey chatter, banshee wails, and the piercing bleeps of car alarms and smoke detectors. Finally, Comet Trails is a ravishing spiral of sound in which notes leave resonant trails like vapor behind a jet.

Ease of Use

It's astonishing how many tones you can pluck from the Filter Modeler without agonizing

over cursors, LCD screens, and sub menus. But you can't quite say the pedal is extremely easy to use. Most of the difficulty stems from the fact that the parameter knobs have different functions from model to model. For example, the Speed control usually regulates modulation rate, but it's the gain control in the Q Filter program, the waveform selector in Synth-O-Matic, and the attack-time control on the Attack Synth model. The designers have done a brilliant job capturing so much programming depth with so few knobs, but count on some initial confusion—as well as frequent visits to the editing-reference chart. You can tweak one parameter of your choosing for each model via an optional expression pedal.

Final Filter

The Filter Modeler is powerful and pragmatic—not to mention wicked fun—and its shortcomings are few. One is a lack of MIDI functions—and before you mutter, "Thank God," remember that this means you can't reliably sync any of these effects to a sequencer. The unit also has no audio triggers or side-chain inputs. Despite these omissions, you'll likely find the Filter Modeler a delight. It strikes well considered balances between retro authenticity and tonal trailblazing, and between ease of use and programming depth. It's one of the most potent filter pedals ever created. ■

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5 Winners will be notified by mail and must sign and return an affidavit of eligibility/recording rights/publicity release within 14 days of notification date. The affidavit will state that winner's song is original work and he/she holds all rights to song. Failure to sign and return such affidavit within 14 days or provision of false/inaccurate information therein will result in immediate disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Affidavits of winners under 18 years of age at time of award must be countersigned by parent or legal guardian. Affidavits subject to verification by JLSC and its agents. Entry constitutes permission to use winners names, likenesses, and voices for future advertising and publicity purposes without additional compensation. 6 Winners will be determined by January 15, 2002, after which each entrant will receive a list of winners in the mail. CDs, Cassettes and lyrics will be sent to winners.

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Exotica

Citron AEG-3

By Matt Blackett

Harvey Citron is no stranger to *Guitar Player* readers. In addition to co-founding Veillette-Citron in the mid '70s, he was a regular contributor to the magazine, and he has run his own instrument company for many years. One of Citron's endeavors has been to bridge the gap between electric and acoustic guitars without homogenizing either tone. That's where the stereo AEG-3 (\$3,800) comes in. It's a unique blend of vintage craftsmanship and modern features.

The AEG-3 has a striking look with a thick body, large horns, and an orange-burst finish. The three pickups lend a symmetrical quality to the guitar's flowing curves, and Citron hand-winds the alnico V P-90-style units with a different wire gauge and a different number of turns for each pickup. According to Citron, this method improves the instrument's overall sonic balance by allowing him to optimize each pickup for its position on the guitar. The wooden bridge—a string-through-body design—includes an EMG piezo pickup under its large, compensated bone saddle.

The AEG-3's woods look sexy, rich, and inviting. The chambered, $2\frac{1}{4}$ "-deep body is made of beautiful mahogany, and the $\frac{1}{8}$ "-thick spruce top is nicely grained. The control cavity opening is a little rough and uneven, but this has no effect on the AEG-3's sound or playability.

The mahogany neck sports a light oil finish, and a comfortable, medium-beefy shape that makes it feel as good as it looks. The frets are clean but not totally polished, and the rather flat radius—combined with a low action—created some buzzing, and also caused upper-register bends to fret out slightly. Because the one-piece bone saddle isn't adjustable, any buzzing issues must be dealt with via the trussrod, which is accessed between the neck pickup and the fretboard.

For all of its attributes, the AEG-3 can certainly be used like a standard—albeit full-featured—guitar. You can plug in a mono cable and use the blend control to move between magnetic-pickup and piezo tones. However, the real power of the AEG-3 is best appreciated by plugging in a stereo cable and running the magnetic pickups to a guitar amp,

Continued on page 157



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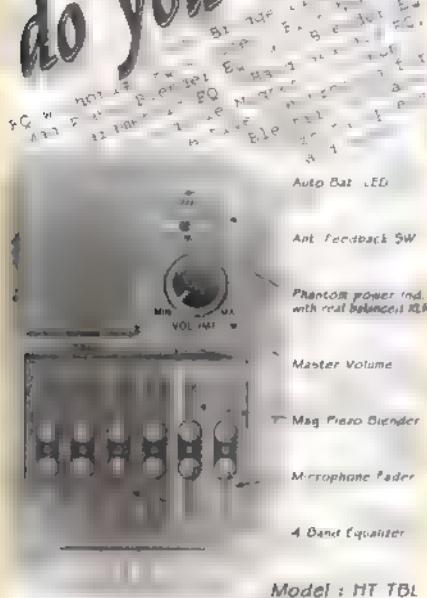
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Sonic Snapshot

SRV'S LEFT-HAND MUTING

BY JUDE GOLD



Why did Stevie Ray Vaughan's licks absolutely *scream*, while some imitators manage little more than a whimper? It wasn't growing up on Texas barbecue.

cue that made Vaughan's attack so tasty. Nor was it solely because the late bluesman played strings gauged as heavy as .018-.074 through a wall of wide-open tube amps. Most of the SRV sting came

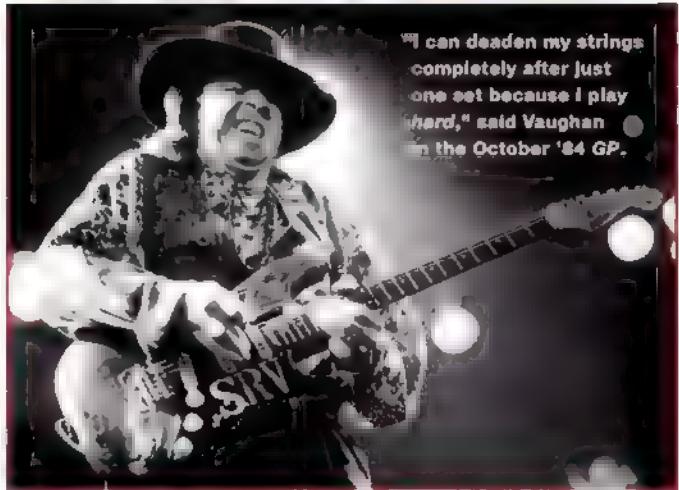
Ex. 1

Ex. 2

$\text{♩} = 100$
Saucy shuffle

Ex. 3

$\text{♩} = 112$
Frenzied



"I can deaden my strings completely after just one set because I play hard," said Vaughan in the October '84 GP.

from the same place great guitar tone always originates—a magical pair of hands.

Producing a meaty tone requires learning how to pick notes and chords with not just your wrist, but with your entire *body*. Once you get your body behind a lick, your soul will follow, and left-hand muting can help.

Call it a sloppy chokehold on the guitar, but nobody ever whacked Vaughan's thumb with a ruler and told him to get it behind the neck. By instinctively muting

with the flesh of his left-hand fingers and thumb, Vaughan could strike all six strings with reckless abandon, and have only select notes ring through. You too can close your eyes, lose yourself in the groove, and absolutely kill any note you choose with a huge swing of your strumming arm. Here's how:

With a few notes from the A blues scale, Ex. 1 prompts you to strike all six strings, but let only one note ring. Try downstrokes and up-strokes. The trick is using your extra left-hand fingers and your left thumb to deaden unwanted strings.

Now try Ex. 2 for an SRV-style Texas shuffle. With your left hand, mute all the open strings, and let only the bass notes ring on the downstrokes. Mute the lowest two strings to cop Vaughan's trademark, behind-the-beat up-strums.

Turn on the adrenaline for the feisty sixteenth-note gesture in Ex. 3—a turbocharged lick typical of what Vaughan might use at the peak of a solo. Use your thumb to play the low notes on the sixth string, your pinky to barre the diads up top, and mute everything in between. Try for a seesaw action between your thumb and pinky so they're never on the neck at the same time.

Though you'll find that attacking the guitar with a brutal physicality delivers a quick death to your strings, left-hand muting will add new life to your playing. And that's an excellent trade-off.

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Piano-Style Comping

BY JUDE GOLD

 Why should pianists have all the fun? When it comes to playing two-part comping patterns, it's hard to compete with 88 keys and ten fingers—unless you're Tuck Andress or Charlie Hunter. However, this spicy montuno riff (Ex. 1) will add a "two-handed," piano-style salsa vibe to your playing and buff out your chops.

For starters, jumping quickly from chord to chord will build left-hand dexterity. Next, plucking the piano player's left-hand part (stems down) with your thumb and index finger, and the right-hand part (stems up) with your middle and ring fingers will strengthen fingerstyle chops. (Pickers aren't off the hook. Simply team up your pick and middle finger, and your ring and pinky fingers.) The groove's heavy syncopation will help deepen your rhythmic pocket, but, most of all, this riff will teach you to handle bass lines and chords.

When you've got this montuno licked, try revoicing it so you can handle it in other keys (Ex. 2). Now all you need is a percussionist and a trumpet player, and this groove will last all night.



Ex. 1

♩ = 120-160 Cm7 F9 Dm7b5 etc. Gaug

Ex. 2

♩ = 120-160 Gm7 C9 Am7b5 etc. Daug

CHOPS BUILDER

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Triple-Stacking Scales and Riffs

BY JUDE GOLD



If good things come in threes, then this lesson should do wonders for your fretboard chops. No longer will you be intimidated by expansive melodic runs that stretch from one end of the neck to the other. You'll realize how simple it is to seamlessly—and tastefully—make

scales and riffs ascend or descend through three octaves.

Though you probably learned a basic, single-position major scale in your very first guitar lesson, you may be surprised to discover that three-octave scales that sprawl across 12 frets are easier to memorize than their more rudimentary

cousins. This is because triple-octave scales repeat themselves every two strings. So if you learn the fingering for the first two strings, you've learned the fingering for all six.

The concept is simple, and Ex. 1 should make it clear with a three-octave G Mixolydian scale. First, we take all seven scale degrees and fit them

Ex. 1

III post

v pos.

VIII D.O.S.

Sheet music for a 12-string guitar in G major. The top staff shows a melody with fingerings 1, 2, 4, 1, 2, 4, 4. The bottom staff shows a harmonic progression with notes 5, 7, 9, 10. The right side of the page shows a scale with notes 8, 10, 12, 13, 15.

Ex. 2

$\sigma = 80$ G7

With teeth

Ex. 3

$\mu_s = 50-60$ G7

Slow blues



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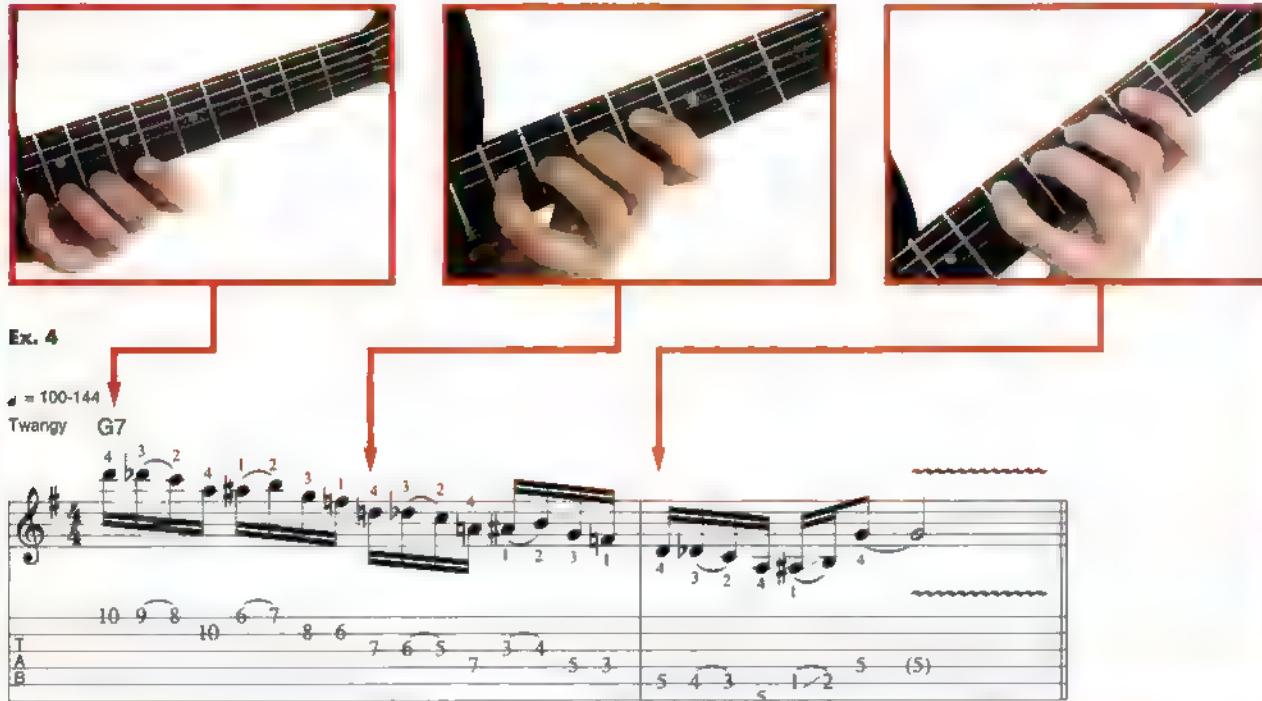
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on the lowest two strings (third position). Then we simply play the same notes with the identical fingering an octave up on the middle two strings (fifth position), and again on the upper two strings (eighth position), adding a final high G at the end of the run for closure. By stacking the fingering three-

high we've tripled our reach.

But scales aren't music. Ex. 2 shows you how to make a blues-tinged riff ascend effortlessly through three octaves. Once you've got this lick down, try to make the phrasing less predictable by toying with the time signature. For example,

rewriting the riff in a slow, 12/8 blues feel (Ex. 3) tasters it up by shifting the accents around. Suddenly the lick sounds much less repetitive. And don't forget to try *descending* stacked riffs. Ex. 4 offers a flat-picking descender that will work atop any twangy G7 groove. ■



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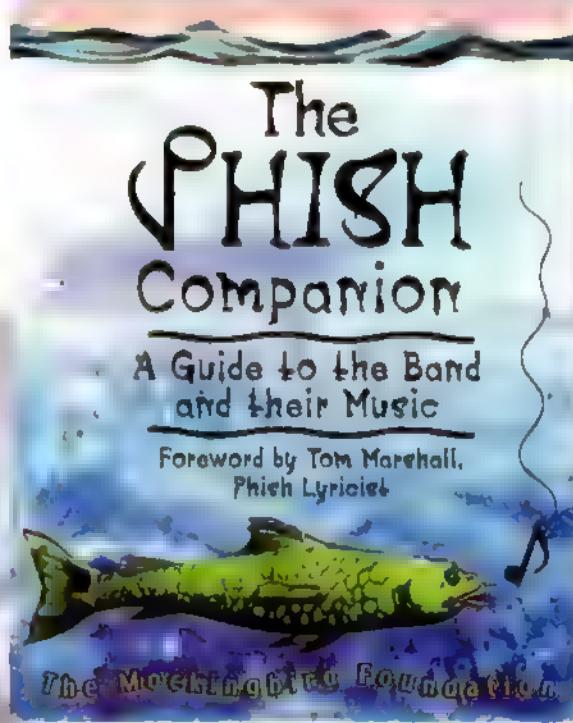
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Exotica

Continued from page 149

and the piezo to an acoustic amp, P.A., or bass amp. But even if you send the piezo to another electric-guitar amp, it's still worth your while to run in stereo, because you can keep the acoustic tone squeaky clean and distort the electric sound.

To test the AEG-3, I used a Marshall JCM 2000 for the magnetic pickups, and ran the piezo into the acoustic channel of a Hughes & Kettner Zen-Tera. Using the AEG-3's blend control, I could morph between a sparkly piezo tone with a hint of grit, a crunchy rhythm sound with a slight high-end shimmer, a full-blown dirty sound, and anything in between. Citron has done a great job of delivering lots of on-the-fly options without cluttering the AEG-3's top with a zillion knobs and switches.

The AEG-3's pickups have a very detailed quality, and offer good punch and clarity while still sounding organic. The bridge position sounds like a big Tele, and combining the neck and middle pickups conjures a cool, Knopfler-approved bell tone. Because the middle pickup isn't reverse wound/reverse polarity, there are no hum-canceling positions on the AEG-3. Despite that fact, and the presence of two other potential noisemakers—the piezo and the chambered body—the AEG-3 is very quiet.

Speaking of the piezo, the EMG system sounds exceptionally good, with tons of headroom and very low handling noise. The EMG BT active EQ circuit offers four user-selectable center frequencies for the treble control, but the way Citron set the circuit at the factory was very musical and flexible. Part of the secret to the great acoustic tone is the Pau Ferro bridge. According to Citron, a wooden bridge can do electric tones better than a metal bridge can do acoustic tones, and the AEG-3 certainly bears that out.

No two ways about it, this is a unique instrument that offers a huge amount of tonal choices. The minor setup issues on the AEG-3 are easily dealt with, and the slight irregularities in construction will be viewed by many as a certificate of one-of-a-kind authenticity. For players who want great electric tones and convincing amplified acoustic sounds in a handcrafted guitar, the AEG-3 does the trick.

Citron, 282 Chestnut Hill Road, Woodstock, NY 12498, (845) 679-7138 citron-guitars.com

Tonal Purity

Continued from page 136

other H&K tube models, the chassis is chrome plated, as are the covers for the hefty output and power transformers. The clear Plexiglas front panel makes it easy to see these details,

and two thin fluorescent tubes mounted on the panel's top edge cast a soft, bluish glow that highlights the engraved logo. Adding to the Puretone's visual vibe is its comfy, rugged handle, which consists of a chromed-steel spring inside a clear-plastic casing.

Tones

Tested with a Les Paul and a Strat, and connected to a variety of cabinets (including a Celestion Vintage 30-loaded Marshall 4x12 and an open-back 1x12 with a Celestion Blue), the Puretone demonstrated an ability to go from clean to mean with a twist of the guitar's volume control. In a nutshell, the amp sounds similar to a mid-'70s, non-master Marshall, but with more edge and presence.

The Growl control is key to the Puretone's stashbox. Turn it counter-clockwise, and the amp is ready for rhythm playing or cleaner lead work. In this mode, the EQ controls are fully operable, providing subtle-yet-effective bass and middle enhancement and plenty of treble. The absence of a bright switch is not a concern. Turning the Growl knob fully clockwise unleashes a big increase in gain, loudness, and aggression as the tone controls are excised from the circuit. The distortion character remains decidedly Marshall-like, but the enhanced upper mids and highs provide chainsaw-like cutting power. In fact, the difference between having the tone controls completely in or out of the circuit is enough to warrant making the Growl function footswitchable.

Plugged into an 8Ω cabinet, the Puretone is about as loud as a 50-watt Marshall—which means it's ideal for rocking out on large stages. The Power Level feature is subtle—you can barely detect a difference at 80 percent power, and the 50 percent setting merely softens the amp's sting when you're playing a smaller room. If you really need to tame the Puretone, plugging into a 16Ω cab is the most effective way to go.

Pure Value

The Puretone succeeds in its mission of delivering a sturdy range of clean and distorted tones, but with its \$2,449 price tag, the amp also faces stiff competition from some of the best handwired boutique amps on the market. Bottom line: I dig the Puretone's streamlined mojo, but the amp would be a lot more loveable if its retail price was about \$1,000 less.

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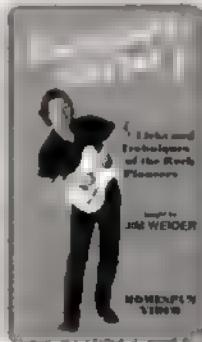
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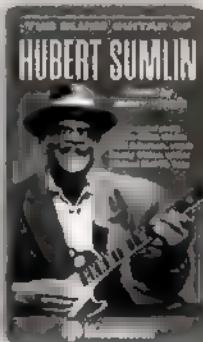
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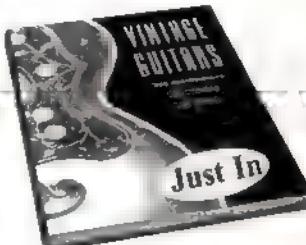
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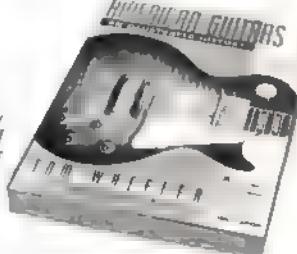


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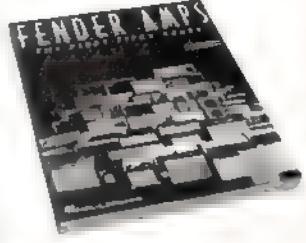
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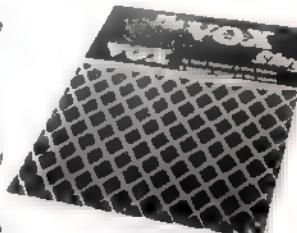


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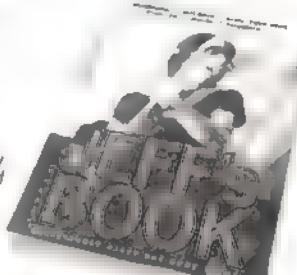
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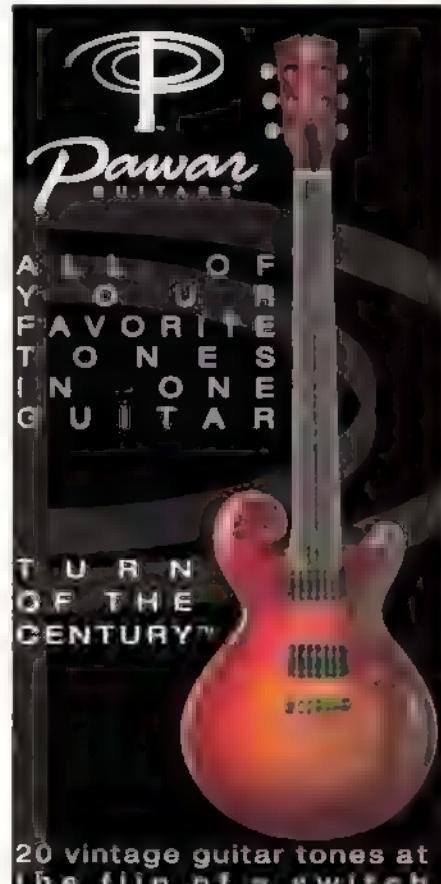
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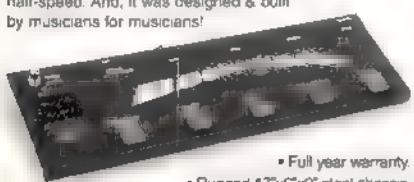
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Encore



Is this Bigsby the first modern solidbody? That's an argument we can't settle here. For one thing, the answer depends on your definition of "modern." But this guitar is undeniably one of the most innovative 6-strings in history.

Built by pedal-steel luthier Paul Bigsby for one of the most influential guitarists of all time, the legendary Merle Travis, this ground-breaking solidbody

came to life in the summer of '48.

"I wanted a guitar that would sustain for a long time, and that would be solid—like a pedal or lap steel, but with a regular neck," said the late Travis, who was a good friend of Bigsby's. "One day I said to Paul, 'Can you build me this thing?' I drew him a picture of the guitar, drew a little hook on the peghead, and put all the tuning keys on top. Then I drew a violin-type tailpiece and a tenor

banjo-style armrest. The more

Paul looked at it, the more excited he got, and he said, 'I can do it!'

Well ahead of its time, this Bigsby predated the Telecaster by two years, the Les Paul by four years, and the Strat by nearly six years. Though the guitar's possible influence on Leo Fender is a topic too broad for this column (for more on that subject check out Richard Smith's excellent book, *Fender: The Sound Heard*

Round the World), the similarities between the Bigsby and Fender's early Telecasters were arguably significant.

Though Bigsby ultimately became known for the vibrato tailpiece that bears his name, he built a handful of instruments like this one—all fated to gain historical prominence, if not commercial success. Guitar courtesy of Country Music Hall of Fame. Photo:

Jim Marshall. —TOM WHEELER

LOUD IS GOOD.

(Preferably so loud that you can stun small animals and peel paint.)

Accurate is better.

(...assuming you've practiced a lot and are reasonably in tune.)

THE SRI530 IS BOTH.

In terms of technical advancement, the active SRI530 resembles a conventional SR speaker about as much as a jet fighter resembles a hang-glider.

The SRI530 is a 3-way design with a separate 6-inch midrange transducer, so vocals and instruments are rendered with extraordinary detail and clarity.

Each transducer is driven to its maximum output by an individual, custom-designed high-current power amplifier. You get higher SPLs, tighter bass and better dynamic response...and don't have to lug around a rack of outboard amps and an electronic crossover.

Built-in electronic equalization smooths each transducer's response curve; time and phase compensation circuits coordinate each driver's output for pin-point imaging.

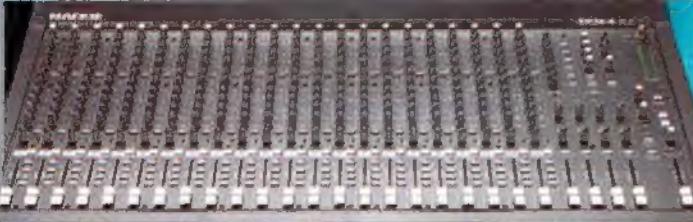
The RCF Precision™ HF compression driver and midrange transducer are integrated into a single Optimized Wavefront™ horn for flatter response and wider dispersion. The cast-frame 15-inch LF transducer features our exclusive Inside/Outside voice coil for maximum heat resistance.

We could go on and on. But to become a believer, all you have to do is visit your nearest Mackie Dealer and hear the loud, accurate SRI530.


Our asymmetrical Optimized Wavefront™ horn integrates the output of the HF compression driver with the 8-inch midrange driver (whose cone is shaped to become part of the main horn). Treble and midrange arrive at the audience's ears properly blended.

PERFECT MATCH: THE SR24-4-VLZ® PRO MIXER

- 4-bus design • 20 premium XDR™ microphone preamps • 24 total channels with 20 mono line level/mic chs. & 2 stereo line level chs.
- 6 aux sends per ch. • Inserts on mono chs. • 3-band EQ with swept mid & low cut filter (mono chs.) • EFX to Monitor • Separate talkback section with extra mic preamp • RCA tape inputs & outputs • 60mm long-wear log-taper faders • Solid steel chassis & mucho mono more



The SRI530 just looks like an SR speaker. Actually it has a three-way electronic crossover, three FR Series™ power amps with 500 total watts RMS delivered to the transducers, three parametric equalizers and an electronic time corrector...built into an astonishing SR speaker.



1-inch exit diameter compression driver with integrated phase plug

Optimized Wavefront™ Horn properly blends HF and mids

8-inch midrange transducer with integrated phase plug

16-ply Baltic Birch trapezoidal enclosure with rugged resin end caps

Weight-balanced side handles plus top and bottom handles

15-inch cast-frame LF transducer with heat-resistant Inside/Outside voice coil and high-flux magnetic circuit

Inside: 3 separate FR Series™ amplifiers with 500 total watts RMS delivered to the transducers

Inside: Phase accurate electronic crossover, electronic parametric equalization, time correction and phase alignment circuitry

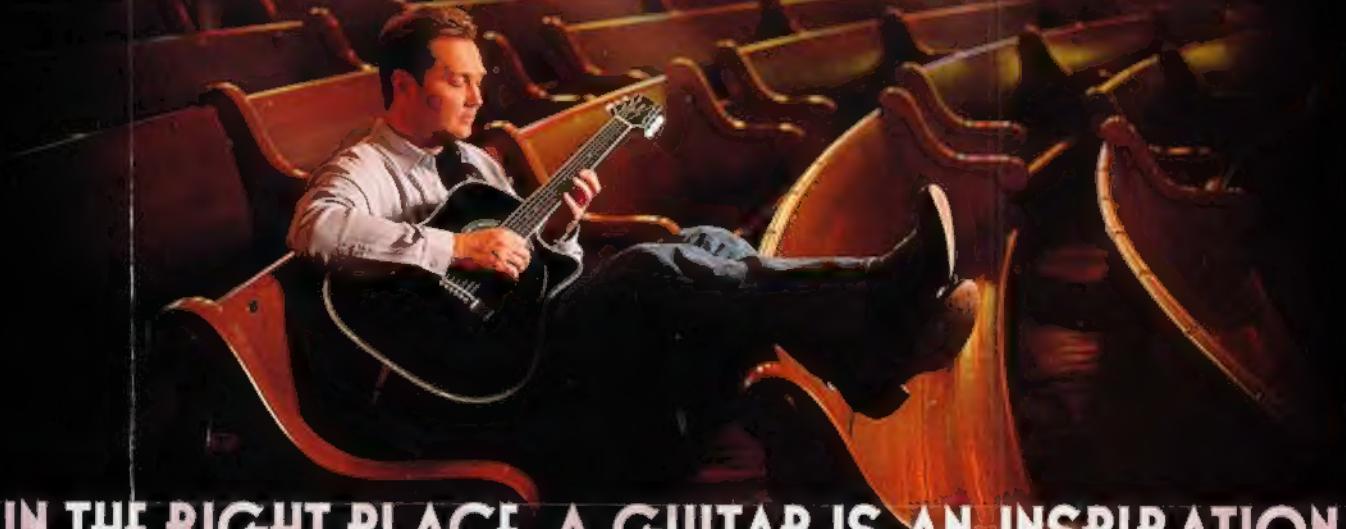


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